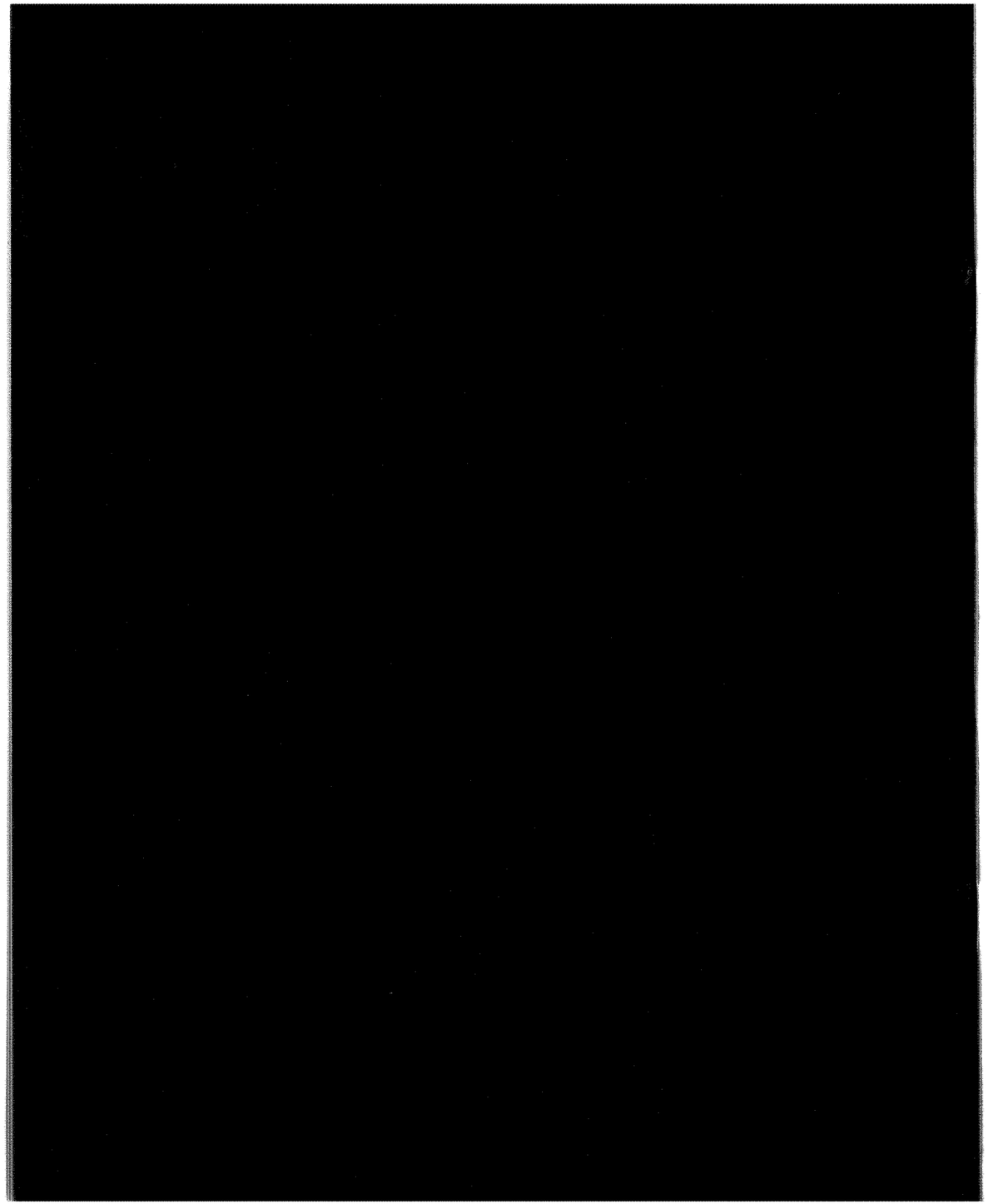
HUNCKE'S JOURNAL

HERBERT HUNCKE



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Drawings by Erin Matson

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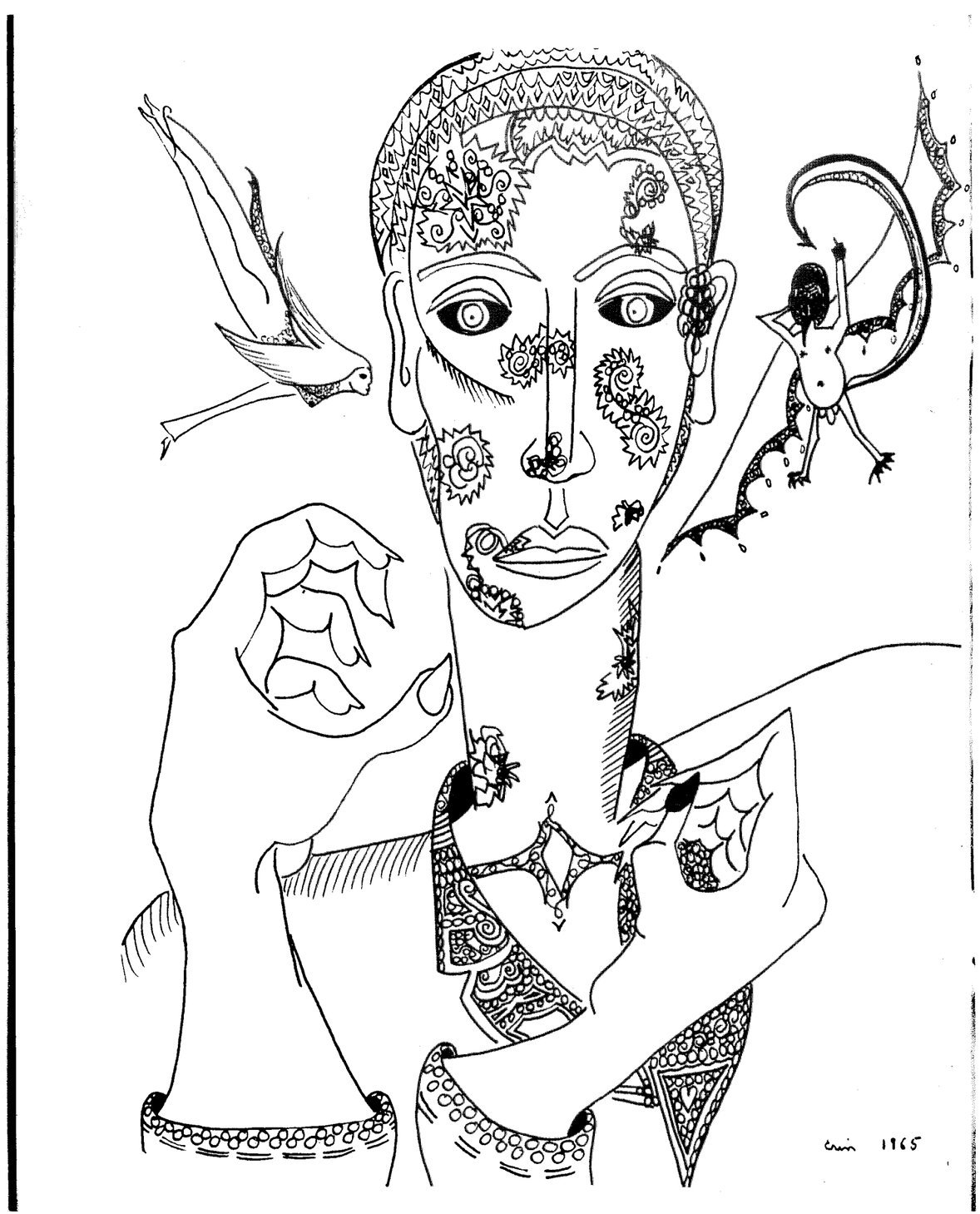

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The Poets Press Fifty-four East Fourth Street New York City

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HERBERT HUNCKE

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Drawings by Enid Munson

The Grail Press

New York City 1903

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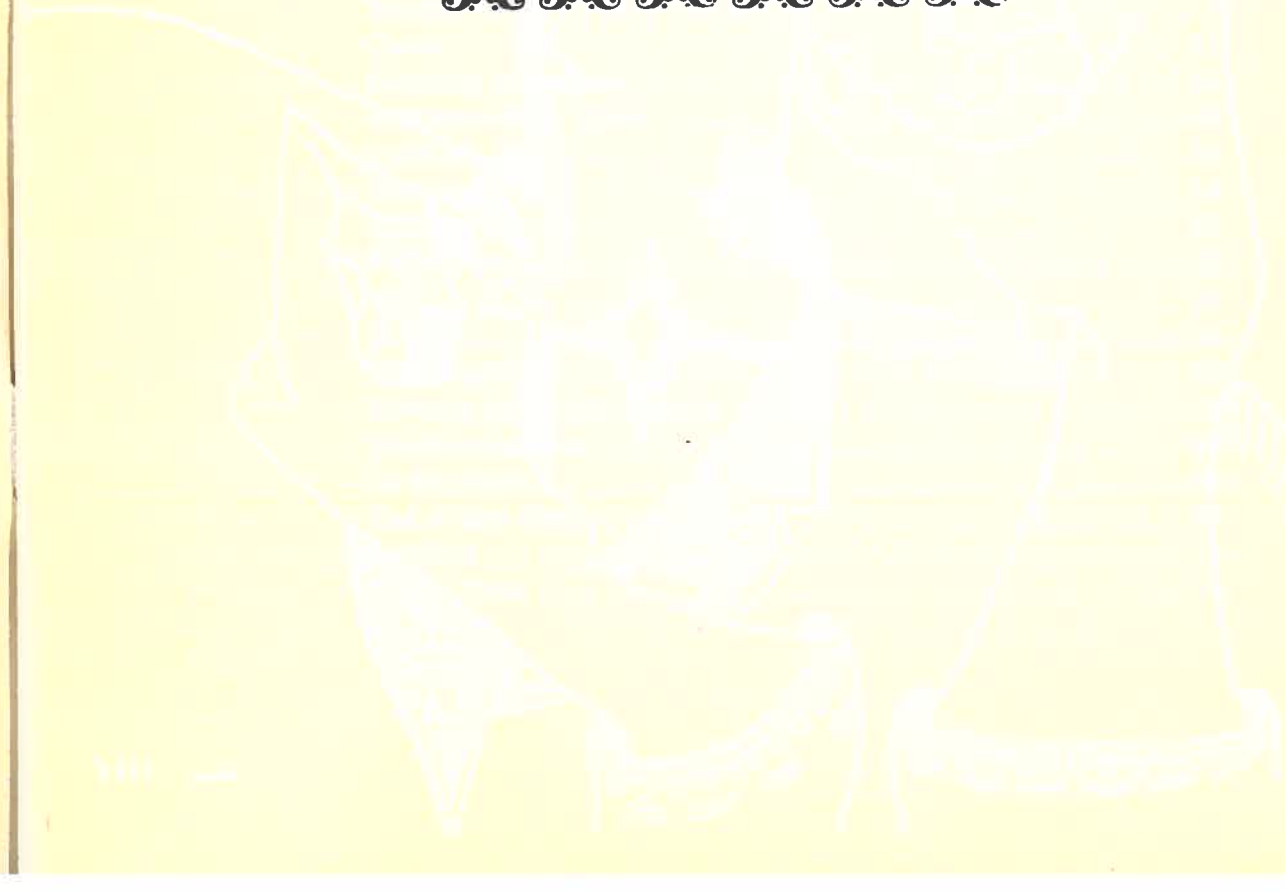
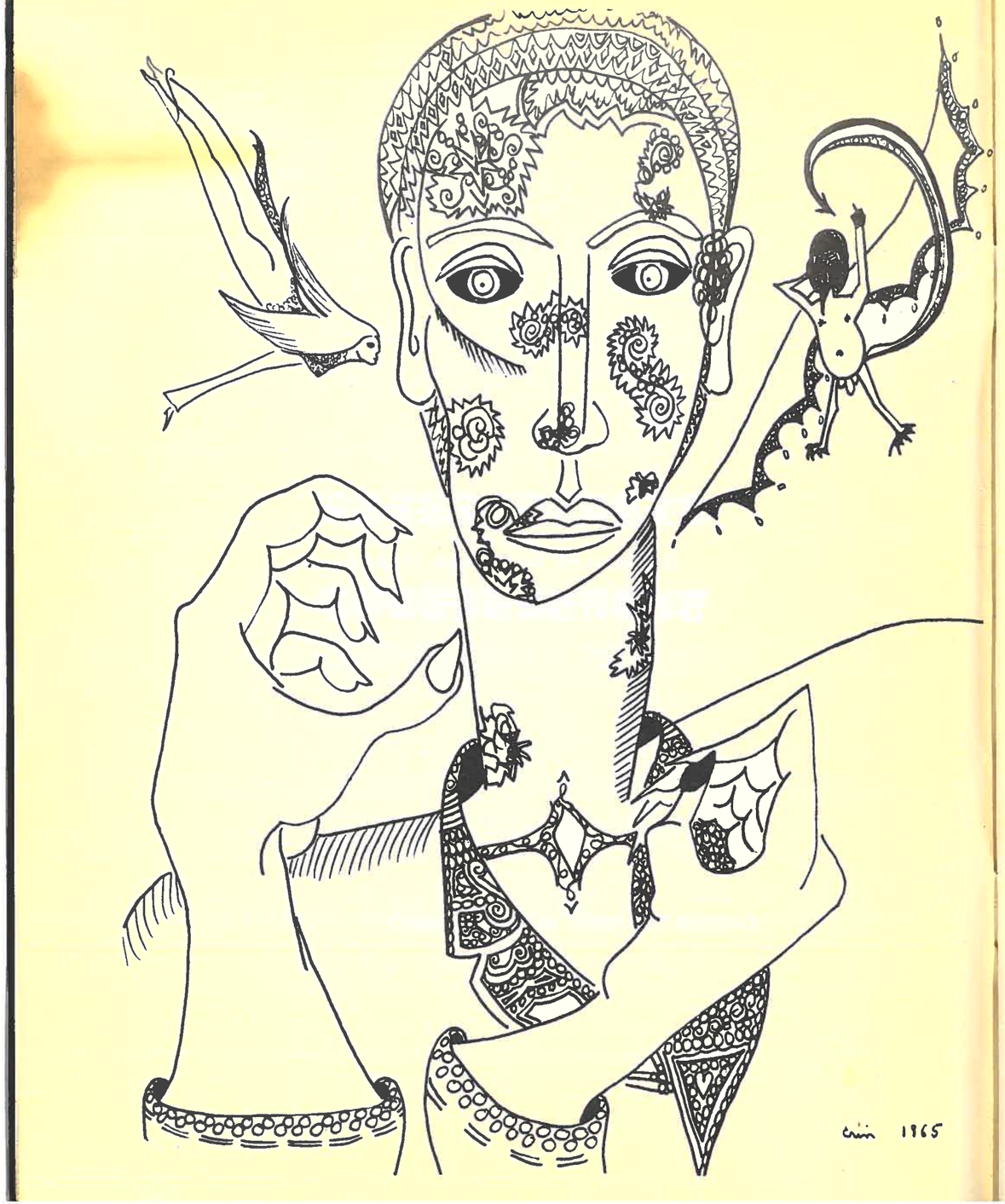
Dedicated to Panna Grady.





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Song of self

HERBERT E. HUNCKE

My name; although I'm known generally as Huncke and by a few as Herbert and in the past as Herbie. It is seldom I'm referred to as Mr. Huncke and when formal introduction is required it is usually—Herbert Huncke.

I mention all this concerning my name simply because recently I've grown to dislike my name—not because my name is Herbert Huncke but rather because I've reached a point where my name (any name I might have had) by its mere utterance creates an almost weary and loathsome feeling in me. When I say it to myself—and frequently I say it to myself —I am immediately aware of a sense of disgust as though the sounds I make are significant of not only me but of a new and strange disease and I am sure, for at least the instant, I am at last slipping into an insanity from which there is no escape.

For several years I've been confident I will become insane, in fact I've felt thusly almost as far back as I am able to recall.

Once, when I thought I would become a writer (I was quite young—fourteen at the time) I made periodical attempts to write poetry and on this particular occasion I became aware fully of the sense of pending insanity. It was shortly after dawn and a huge glistening sun was ascending a delicate blue sky. It was early summer and people were beginning to enjoy the bright colors of summer attire. I was living on Superior Street just east of North State Street in Chicago in an old wood frame house that had been converted into what is called studio apartments. The house was well constructed and the rooms were large with high ceilings and windows reaching the full height of each room.

I had spent the few hours just preceding daybreak bathed in moonlight, watching the sky thru one of my windows (there were two in this room—huge windows which could be flung up quite high, letting in all the outside, sound and scent and air on either side of a fireplace with a white mantel with two large brass candlesticks with tall green candles) allowing my thoughts to dwell as they would and pondering over my problems and the magnificence of a daybreak.

I had sent my minute energy quota into the central urge aiding each rent in the block of darkness, tugging at each fold of light to make way for the one great power: the sun.

And now, as I descended the front steps to the street level—the sun was hurtling and spiraling across a huge space of blue.

To one side of the steps was a flower bed sparsely filled with yellow jonquils and I glanced at them and then toward the sidewalk to observe several young women who were rapidly walking past and talking of their work and of something amusing, as when they had almost reached the corner they began laughing. Their costumes were charming and one wore something with large figures of poppy red which I liked.

I was rather frightened and deeply impressed. I stood a long time thinking about it, becoming more convinced each instant, I was doomed.

Several hours later when I had finished my breakfast and returned to my apartment, I tried putting into a poem all which I had felt and I was rather pleased with what I had written, although I can't remember any of it and the actual writing is long misplaced—along with everything of myself of that time.

It wasn't long after I began traveling and ceased considering Chicago as my home.

January 16, 1964

This morning more self indulgence—granting even greater range of complaint—bemoaning my plight—riddled with self—self in all phases—self loathing—self pity—self—always self—and no courage wherewith to pulverize and smash—grind down—sift and sift again—oh no—I remain and see—and feel—and sense the putrid promise—know in essence—full force the tortured presence—aware the tainted meat—luminous decaying—conscious—the pinched nostril—the troubled eye—the tensed—slow—withdrawing—the separate search for escape—the bewildered reason—and deeper still—another set of socal chords—screaming vituperation and in subtle counterpoint—steady and measured—the throbbing whispered phonetic assemblage persistently declaring—"I will go—I will no longer inflict my vileness upon you"—knowing it a lie—since—this is it—not only here but everywhere—the knowing—the tender muscle crunchy—the purple veiled vein—juicy—rarely sweet—the maggot awaits birth—resting cradled in putrescence and laved with green bile—

Lay out the binding gauze—row upon row—mix the jellied fluids. Cleanse the injectors—open sacks of formaldehyde—rubber tubings—red rubber gloves. Hone the scalpels. The first slice is important and should be clean and true. Basins to catch the freshets of red blood—soon to pale and turn hue—wads of cotton to stuff the asshole—the nostrils puff the cheeks—fill out the hollows.

And it is right—they turn away and hope I will go—leave—find another place. How long should one have to contend with the burden of my being on the scene. It is certainly not their doing—I can't even function efficiently enough after—lo—these many years to have my own hole to crawl into.

And besides how tiresome my driveling statements of love are to listen to. What is the matter with saying something sexy—for a change at least. I could yell—fuck—fuck—fuck—aloud—and then. Speak in raptured tone of slit pink cunts—and hard throbbing rigid cocks—and drops of semen—sucking warm come—bodies adhering to another—rhythmic plunge and thrusts of red phallus—grinding thighs and muscled bellies—pink teasing tongues—moistening the slick headed pricks—darting into the anus—licking the ass hole—wetting the genitals—deftly manipulating the balls—exciting the stiffened prick and giving way to the wet red lips eager to wrap round the straining shaft—the head hotly pressing forward into the throat—swelling at the final shove—plunging deeper as bursting jets of hot juice stream forth and the whole body writhes with delight—or of melon like breasts—thickets of pussy hair of mating and loving—of wildly jerked off cocks—of fingers in snatches of love and sex—of fucking—sucking—licking—eating—jerking off and finger fucking. Why not?

Oh I will try—must try to get away somehow. I could never bear pity—already I believe they pity me—and all is lost.

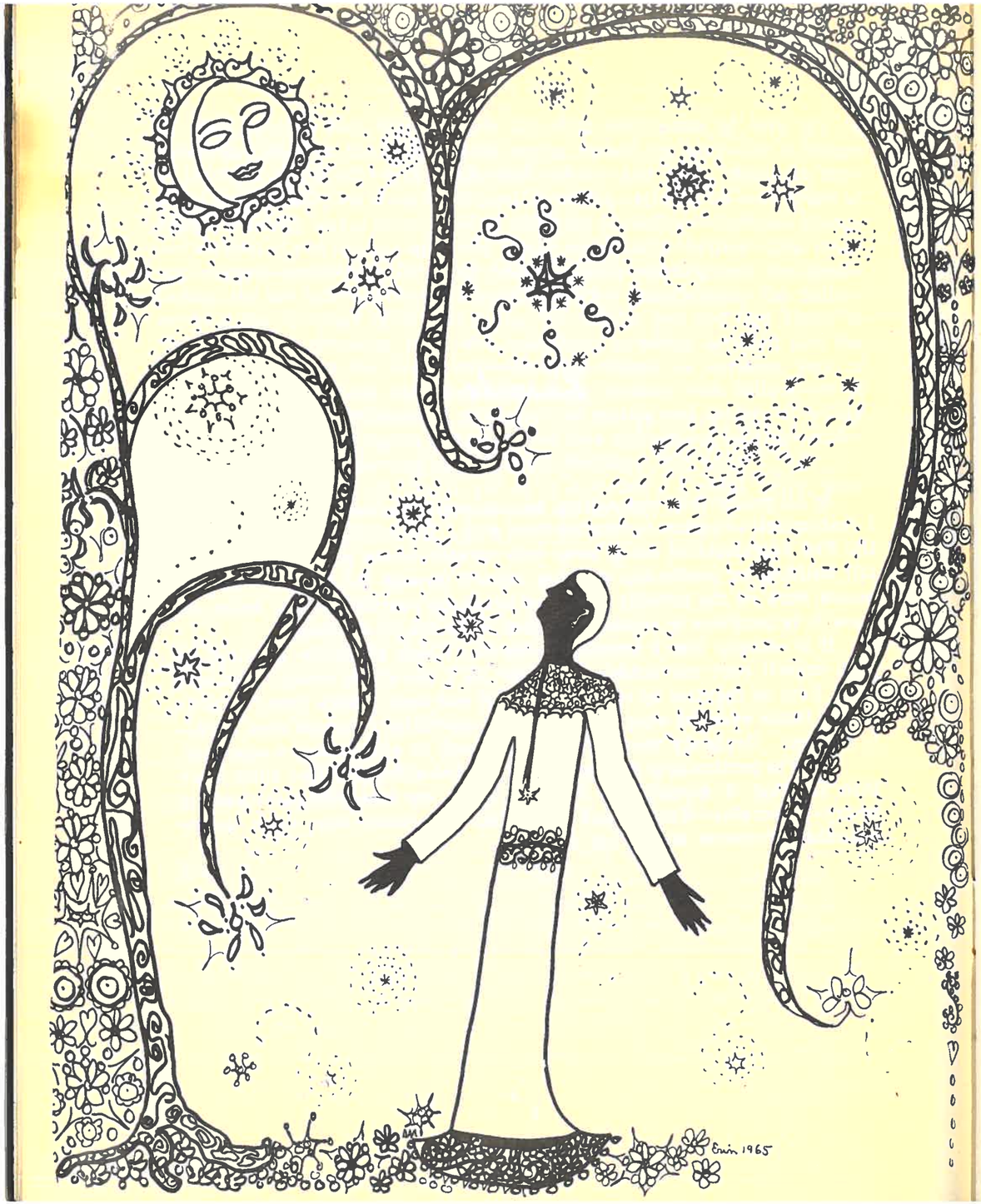
Suicide

In all probability committing suicide would be the proper course yet I find myself reluctant to take the final step. Periodically all through my life I've contemplated doing away with myself—either by jumping from a tall building or preferably shooting myself through the temple. At moments such as the present I find my existence overwhelmingly futile and know it is pointless to continue on when there can be no change.

It is simply that I haven't the nerve. I lack the drive required to push myself over the brink. It is like all I do—at the crucial moment I fail. I am as negative as one can imagine and have always found it difficult to finish even the simplest task if the opposition becomes even slightly evident. Certainly there can be no wrong in eliminating a nonentity.

What is particularly strange to me is—that although I feel little other than loathing of myself and fully recognize my insignificance—and am weary—miserable—discouraged and wish for death—way down inside something remains stubbornly alive.

1948



Youth

When I was a schoolboy—age 15—living in what was conceded a respectable middle-class neighborhood in Chicago, I had my first encounter with love.

In the apartment building in which I lived with my mother, brother and grandmother (my mother and father had been divorced two years previously), there were several women who owned chow dogs and they would pay me to take their dogs out for walks. This afforded me opportunity to make something of a show of myself—since chows were quite fashionable—and as I considered myself at least personable in appearance it rather pleased me to imagine that people seeing me walking along the Drive must surely think me the owner and certainly attractive with my pet straining at the leash. Frequently I would walk one of the dogs late in the evening and it was on such an occasion I first met Dick.

I had decided before returning home to stop by the neighborhood drugstore and as I was leaving someone spoke my name. I looked up into the most piercing brown—almost black brown—eyes I have ever seen. They belonged to a man who at the time was in his late 20s—fairly well built—not too tall—with somewhat aquiline features and exceedingly black hair which he wore combed flat to his head. I learned later he was of Russian Jewish parentage.

I was very much impressed by his appearance and felt a strange sensation upon first seeing him which was to repeat each time we met for as long as I knew him. I never quite got over a certain physical response to his personality and even now in retrospect I find myself conscious of an inner warmth.

As I was leaving the drugstore and after he had spoken my name and I had smiled and flushed he commented that I didn't know him but that a friend of his had spoken with me one evening about my dog and that I had given him my name and he in turn had given it to him when they had seen me walking and he had asked if his friend noticed me. He then asked me if I would object to his accompanying me home so that we might become better acquainted. He gave me to understand that he wanted to know me. I was no end pleased by his attention and became animated and flirtatious.

We had a thoroughly enjoyable walk and from that point on I began seeing him fairly regularly. He was in the recording business and was second in charge of a floor of recording studios in one of the large well known office buildings just off Lake Shore Drive a short distance north of the Loop. He knew innumerable people in show business and I spent as much time hanging around the studios as could be arranged. Sometimes we would lunch together or stay downtown for dinner or go to a movie or he would take me along while he interviewed some possible recording star and it was after some such instance at the old Sherman Hotel that he suggested since it was late I call home and ask permission to spend the night downtown. This I was anxious to do as I had long had the desire to sleep with him.

I was still rather green as to what was expected in a homosexual relationship but I did know I was exceedingly desirous of feeling his body near mine and was sure I could be ingenious enough sexually to make him happy with me.

Actually, I had had but little experience other than mutual masturbation with others of my own age and although I knew the word homosexual I wasn't exactly aware of the connotations.

We spent the night together and I discovered that in fact he was nearly as ignorant as I and besides was filled with all sorts of feelings of guilt. We kissed and explored each other's bodies with our hands and after both ejaculating fell asleep in each other's arms.

This began a long period in which he professed deep love for me and on one occasion threatened to throw acid in my face should he ever discover me with someone else.

The affair followed the usual pattern such affairs follow and after the novelty wore off I became somewhat bored, although it appeased my vanity to feel I had someone so completely in my control. Had anyone threatened my supremacy I would have gone to great lengths to eliminate them from the situation.

About this time it was necessary for him to make a business trip to

New York and when he returned he was wearing a Persian sapphire ring which he explained he would give me if I would promise to stay away from some of the people and places I had lately been visiting. I promised to do this and considered the ring mine.

One evening we had dinner in a little French restaurant we frequented and while eating a very handsome young man joined us whom Dick introduced as Richard, who was attending classes at the University of Chicago and was someone he had met recently thru some mutual acquaintance. We sat talking and suddenly I was startled to see the ring on Richard's finger.

Richard was considerably younger than Dick and really very beautiful. He was blonde, with icy blue eyes—innocent and clear. He was very interested in life and people and kept bombarding us with questions—our interests, the theatre, music, art or whatever happened to pop into his head. He was obviously attracted to me and asked permission to call me on the phone so that we might make arrangements to see each other. I complied and began making plans about how to get the ring away from him—after all, I felt the ring was mine—and I wanted it.

And so it happened that I succeeded in twisting one of the few really wonderful things that occurred when I was young into a sordid almost tragic experience which even now fills me with shame.

As I have already said—Richard was good. There was no guile in his makeup and he offered his love and friendship unstintingly. It was he who first introduced me to poetry—to great music—to the beauty of the world and who was concerned with my wants and happiness. Who spent hours making love to me, caressing and kissing me on every part of my body until I would collapse in a great explosion of beauty and sensation which I have never attained in exactly the same way with anyone since. He truly loved me and asked nothing in return but that I accept him—instead of which I delighted in hurting him and making him suffer in all manner of petty ways. I would tease him or refuse him sex or call him a fool or say that I didn't want to see him. Sometimes I would tell him we were finished, thru, and not to call me and try and see me and it was after one such episode on a beautiful warm summer night when I had agreed to see him again if he would grant me a favor—that I asked for the ring and he gave it to me.

The next day I visited Dick at the studios and with many gestures and words of denunciation—flung the ring at him, telling him that we were finished and that anyway he wasn't nearly as amusing as Richard and that maybe and maybe not I'd continue seeing Richard but that in fact he bored me and I only felt sorry for him—and I would never be as big a fool over

anyone as he was over me—and besides my only reason for knowing him at all was so that I could get the ring.

Dick became enraged and began calling me foul names which he sort of spit at me and pulled from his desk drawer a pistol. He was waving it in front of my face and at the same time telling me how cruel and heartless I was and that he could forgive the stupidity of my actions in regard to himself but that the harm I was inflicting on Richard was more than he could stomach and that I would be better off dead. Suddenly he started shouting—"Get out—get out—I never want to see you again!" By this time I was shaking and almost unable to stand and stumbled out of his presence.

The following day in the mail I received a letter from Richard containing a poem—that read almost like this—

A perfect fool you called me.
Perchance not as happy in my
outlook on life and people
as you—
Yet in like manner—playing the
role of a perfect fool—
Gave me a sort of bliss—
You in all your wisdom—will
never know.

Shortly after receiving the letter I called Richard and asked to see him. He refused to see me and at that time I would not plead. A strange thing had happened to me—I had become aware—almost overnight—of the enormity of my cruelty and I was filled with a sudden sense of loneliness —which I have never lost—and I wanted Richard's forgiveness.

Richard never forgave me and I have only seen him once since the time he gave me the ring and that was only long enough for him to tell me —he was trying to forget he had known me.

It was a cold winter day.

Nor did I ever speak with Dick again. Not so many years ago—I read in the paper—he is dead.

1959

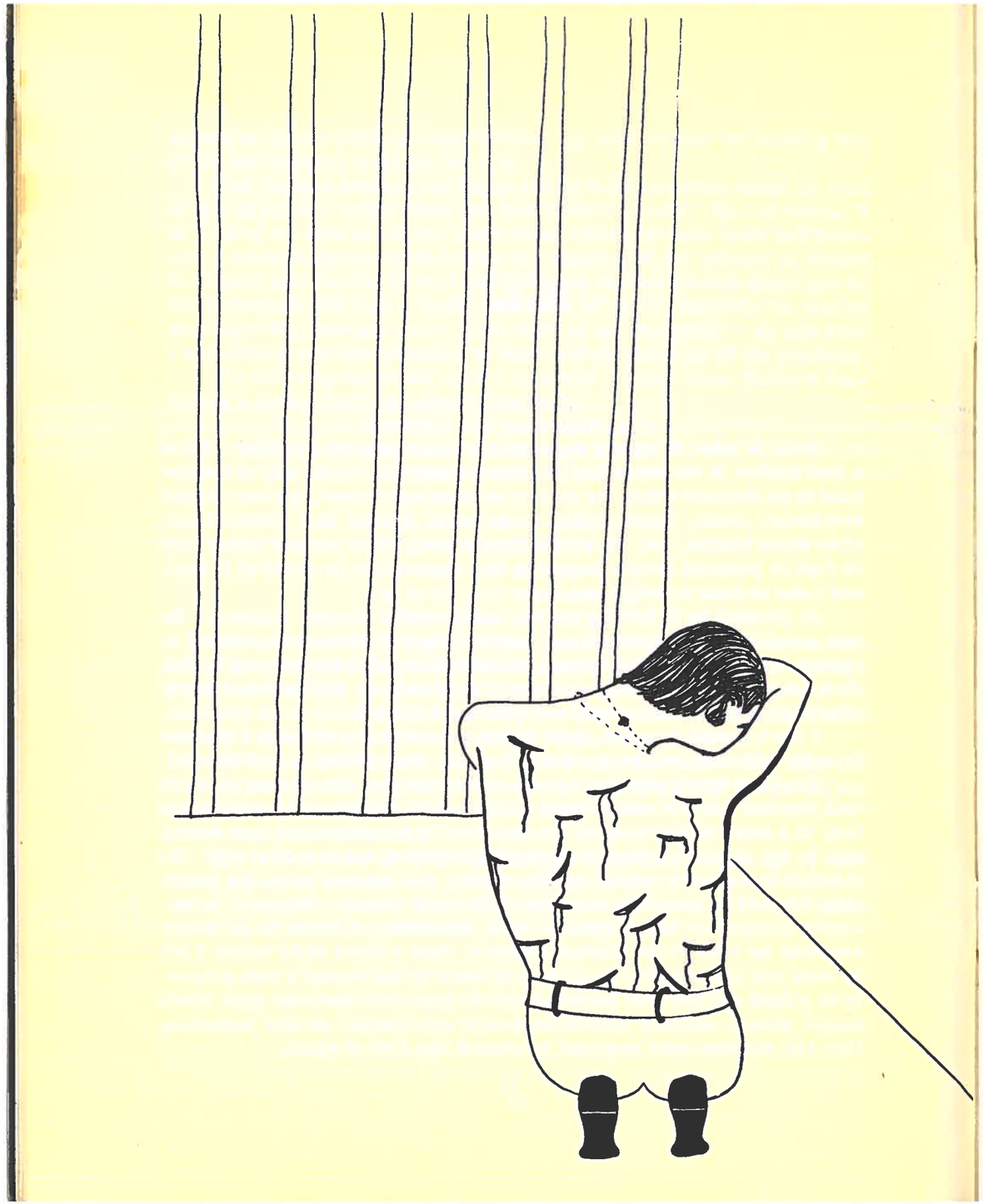
Cuba

Cuba is what is known in present prison jargon as a peddler. He is a real hustler in the sense that if there is anything in the way of contraband to be obtained within the prison—such as eggs, meat, grease, winter overshoes, coats, shirts, tailor made pants, special hair preparations, after shave lotions, etc. he is the man to see. When any new young boys or fags or potential broads appear on the scene Cuba is the first to know and loses no time making contact.

At present he is serving out the last year of a 10-year sentence. He was paroled on one occasion and deported back to Cuba. He refused to remain and through some manner or other succeeded in returning to New York where he immediately became a dope pusher. He operated fairly effectively until he was caught and returned to prison.

I don't recall a great deal of his past history, although I became friendly with him and he spent much of his time telling me of himself.

The first time I saw him he was coming across the prison yard. It was summer and he was without a shirt. The entire upper part of his body is a mass of scars—from the shoulders to the waist—and once seeing him in the shower I noticed a continuation of these scars on his legs. He obtained these scars—which are like shrimp pink colored welts—by lacerating himself on numerous occasions with razor blades. Whenever he becomes enraged or has a fight or does something of which he is deeply ashamed he afterwards slashes himself. Just a short while before I left he went into his cell after an episode in which he had beaten a man severely in a fight and had been punished with 60 days keep-lock—60 days which meant almost solitary confinement—and cut himself so that something like 172 stitches were required to staunch the flow of blood.



He is short of stature with a well proportioned body. He is of light tan color with—other than the scars—smooth, almost delicate appearing skin quite free of chest hair and nearly beardless. He has pleasantly symmetrical facial features with a large brown mole on his left cheek. His eyes are a deep innocent brown. He wears at all times a thin gold chain with a large—nearly the size of a quarter—medallion, given him by his mother, and a thin red silk cord with a tiny rose-shaped knot in it—of which he is quite secretive refusing to explain and resenting having anyone touching it—around his neck.

He considers himself a great lover and is always in the midst of a passionate affair with one of his fellow inmates. He constantly speaks of the size and shape of everybody's ass and will exclaim in positive terms—"Man—I got to cop" each time he sees an ass which especially appeals to him. He goes to great lengths arranging meetings in the yard with his most recent desire and will entice them up to his court where he surreptitiously feels them, all the time trying to convince them they should try and get a job in the messhall where he is working and that all he wants to do is kiss them on the ass. He will say—"Man—I no want—fuck you—just love you. Man—I like your ass. Come in the messhall—we turn steam on in the shower—nobody see—I cop lots times that way. You let me love your ass—I jerk off." Sometimes he is successful and he then goes around beaming at everybody and telling his friends all about how this time he has a lover that really loves him and that this time he is not only going to kiss ass but he's going to get in. He keeps himself well supplied with cigarettes from his peddling activities and sees to it his current interest is never without smokes.

He is a very kind person and is always doing unexpected favors for people he likes. He gambles a great deal and if he wins something gives all his winnings away to people he knows haven't anything of their own.

About a week before I left the prison someone turned a note in to the Principal Keeper about him. Just what it was supposed to contain no one was quite sure, but whatever it said apparently caused the P.K. to refer Cuba's name to the prison psychiatrist, who promptly called Cuba up for an interview, the result being—Cuba was sent over the wall to the State Hospital for the Insane.

When prisoners are transferred from the main prison to the State Hospital they are if violent placed in strait-jackets (restraining jackets they call them) and if not violent are handcuffed and ankle-shackled.

When we last saw Cuba he was being literally dragged into the waiting station wagon wearing a restraining jacket.

Dancing in Prison

I have been in prison—they don't dance in prison—nobody dances unless perhaps, in the cell alone—
snapping fingers and wearing
earphones—and of course in dreams.

And there are good sounds in the prison I was in because it is close to Canada—Montreal—and they like fine sound and many of their programs are dedicated to young jazz musicians and it is not always commercial and some of these cats come on. And then there is some crazy stuff too, right here—that occasionally reaches there. Also, in the yard groups with horns, guitars, and anything to drum—let go and clap hands and beat and I've heard it great—in fact there was one wayout man on a sax who blew all the time alone or with others—in the cell alone and sometimes with a guy two cells away who would pick on a guitar and listen to Jap and these guys would really let go till 7:00 o'clock, when the bell would ring for no more talking.

They sometimes talk about dancing, remembering past experiences with social chicks—"who could dance their ass off, man"—or going to the Palladium and even sometimes the old Savoy and innumerable other spots specially when name bands were on the scene—Basie—Ellington—Kenton—all of them. Of course names are mentioned like Miles Davis—Yardbird Parker—and Shearing—and Sarah Vaughan—Anita O'Day—Keely Smith—Dakota Staton and I could go on naming a while yet—but most of these are for hearing only—I don't suppose that is actually true because one can dance to any sound.

Anyway, I danced last night and it made me very happy. I am not a clever dancer—that is, I don't ever know what I am doing—particularly with my feet—but I always sort of let go—and wow I get some great kicks. And I did last night.

A Story-New York

I have always thought of myself as a good talker and once I talked a man out of shooting another man, although I didn't succeed in talking him out of his violence. He was a man filled with frustration and constant anxiety which would erupt into great outbursts of denunciation toward anyone he felt at the particular time had treated him as he understood it—unjustly—and was apt at such times to resort to physical assault. He wasn't of large stature but possessed an abundance of energy and could—if not checked immediately—inflict much pain. Fortunately, these outbursts occurred seldom and although verbally he was constantly attacking his supposed enemies it was only on rare occasions he gave vent to his more violent impulses.

At the time I am speaking of he was in between steady women and had been shacking up with a girl who was attracted by young boys. She was something of a whore, though she would go to great lengths to deny it and preferred having people think she was being kept by some old man that went to sea who sent her an allotment. She had been making the 42nd St. scene for quite some time and I had gotten to know her thru one of the boys she had picked up.

Just how they met is rather vague, but it seems the main attraction was a certain satisfaction each derived comparing notes concerning their prior loves. He was just getting over being jilted and she had just gotten rid of her most recent boy because she had decided he was queer since he didn't wish to go down on her which was what she liked best.

They were living in a small pad on West 15th St. and we all three

would sit around smoking pot while they did most of the talking. Both sort of considered me a harmless friend each could confide in and frequently called upon me to settle disputes.

He was very possessive and had threatened to beat her if he caught her making it with anyone else. She was always reassuring and called him—her man.

One evening he came in unexpectedly and caught her balling a young kid. I was with him and knew the kid from the Square and managed to get the kid out of the pad before too much trouble developed.

She was contrite and begged forgiveness, explaining that he hadn't laid her the previous night or given her head, and of course he knew how hot natured she was and besides the kid had practically forced her. He admitted to being indirectly responsible—yet no God-damned punk was going to lay his old lady and get away with it. He rushed over and grabbed his gun—which was a gift from his brother, who had brought it back from over-seas—and with me in pursuit rushed out into the night to find the no good son of a bitch and blow his brains out.

We headed more or less toward 42nd St., stopping at various bars en route. He kept up a steady tirade against the poor kid until I could only hope that by this time the kid was somewhere at the other end of Brooklyn.

At three in the morning at the corner of 43rd St. and 8th Ave. just off the corner heading toward 9th Ave. we ran into him.

It was a slightly cool morning and the few people on the streets were rushing along either toward the subway or bars or just to keep warm. The three of us standing in the reflection of the streetlamp must have made a strange picture and frightening. The one pale and shaking, pleading not to be hurt. Another livid with rage—filled with confusion—tense and ready to kill; and the other keenly aware of the drama and horrified—talking, talking, talking against events over which there seemed to be no control and telling first one and then the other—to keep cool. Beseeching the very atmosphere to help prevent the pulling of the trigger. It was a very tense and explosive moment and all I could do was talk. Asking, explaining, reasoning, constantly pointing out the stupidity of the situation and the sheer horror of the whole scene. It seemed that gradually things began to relax and that suddenly it was over.

We spoke of the incident many times and later he was glad—sincerely glad he had calmed down—and has frequently thanked me for my talking.

I no longer know where he is for sure, though via the so-called grape vine he is now in Cleveland—still angry and lonely.

October 1959

I left Bob about two o'clock this morning. He had decided to visit Irma and I felt it wiser of me to remain away from the encounter. We had walked down from the pad through Central Park. Prior to our departure we drank over half a fifth of a Spanish brandy which Bob is particularly fond of and we felt very good. The park is exceedingly delightful at night and we indulged in a very interesting conversation involving sense of honesty, consciousness of mental telepathy, our own responsiveness to each other's worth, and of many intriguing bits of honest revelations. I made some effort to explain my present frame of mind about Vernon and, although nothing lastingly great was achieved, there were several instances of intense purity of feeling. We had both earlier in the evening been weary and by now felt exhilarated. We had smoked a stick of pod and it is doubtful as to whether any two cats could have managed any greater high than the one we were on. Bob became very eloquent and gave me several verbal scores vibrating with good thought and sending warm waves of telepathic impulses. Bob's sensitivity serves him well and frequently his speech is startlingly keen. We both thoroughly expounded our opinions about the true reality which we both feel is seldom sensed because of the crassness of the overall pattern of daily life and the false values which are foisted on us as real.

In my usual clumsy manner I blundered in with the first bite of depression. I do this unfailingly and it is one of my anxieties. From then on a pall fell over us and although the joy of freedom continued it began its departure. We were once again taking up the shackles and would soon be wearing them. It is as though I eject a poison.

1959

Strangers

1.

Early morning and the sound of trucks and voices tinged with sleep and occasional alarms ringing and the sky fleeced with clouds and pale blue. The air not yet warm but already greeting the new day with fresh river breezes. Light spots here and there on brick walls—light, from the faintly glimmering sun.

A stranger cold and tired and lost and afraid and filled with sorrow. Whose father shed tears at his departure from home and bade him not return until he has a job and is dependable and to be relied upon to follow in the footsteps of his three quite dependable brothers. A stranger insecure and haunted by his unhappiness when not working but unable to work because he is unable to adjust to the routine demanded of him when he does work.

Seeking merely to be free of anxiety which verges—so he fears—on the insane. Young but willing to accept his defeat—to place himself among the others who are lost and bewildered and frighteningly insecure. Who rhapsodizes over filling a little black lunch pail and setting out for his labor with the great majority but who cannot because he is a revolutionist and does not know it. Who loathes himself and believes he is a fool. But who breathes from a heart that is kind and good—but hurt. Who fears jail but has been there because of a fondness for automobiles. Whose legs ache from having been so long on his feet and feels sure paralysis is setting in or perhaps rheumatic fever. Who is frightened of sex but curious and rather in awe.

A pitiable fellow indeed. I like him and I hope I can do something for him and help him to become a bit more complete.

I watched them talking and looking at each other—occasionally one or the other glancing around—sometimes commenting to each other about what they had observed—then returning to their original conversation—each engrossed in the other—a certain aura of comradeship emanating from them—obvious to anyone observing them.

They were young—one of medium light complexion—flat—semi-harsh masculine features—inclined toward stockiness—the other dark—with sharp pointed features—thin and tall so that he draped a chair rather than sat in it.

When I had first noticed them another fellow was sitting with them and the lighter complected of the pair directed many of his remarks in his direction. Although he pretended an interest in what was being said he was far more interested in what was happening around him. Watching the passing flow of people going by the window—every now and then looking back over his shoulder to see what was taking place in the rest of the room. Finally he saw someone he knew passing along the street and with a quick good-bye to his companions—darted out onto the street.

The two remaining apparently discussed him for a few moments—talking and making gestures obviously referring to the recently departed acquaintance.

I had no way of being sure—but from watching—I decided they were part of the usual 42 St. crowd of hustlers—with a special interest in each other. Of course—the possibility I am romanticising exists—but there was something in the way they looked at each other—plus an off handed manner of accepting one another—made me feel—I was not mistaken in believing a feeling of love was exchanged between the two.

Much later—after they too had gone on their way—and I had grown weary of sitting still—deciding to walk along the street—I changed upon the darker of the two standing talking to a much older man—passing by overhearing a snatch of conversation between the two—the younger fellow saying—"I need ten dollars—I have to pay—" not hearing the finish because by then I was already passed.

3.

"Oh"—she said—"I hate to go home. Don't you hate to go home? Why I paid a whole dollar to go and see—that picture with all the colored people —you know the one—they pray—Oh—they pray a lot and sing."

The other one said—"Porgy and Bess?"

"Yes—that's the one—I didn't like it—just wasted the dollar—but I hate to go home. I always come here and sit—I would rather sit here than go home. The place I live is nice—real clean—the room good size—real big—new furniture. Pretty—kind of like that modern stuff you see in them movie pictures. Still it's only a room—and I gotta stay some place—but I hate to go home.

The two women were old. The one who hated going home—was alone—had nobody—not even a cat. The other one—had a cat and Joe. Joe was her boy friend—she saw him once a week. It was nice. Made her feel less alone than her friend. She guessed she could understand. She would sure miss Joe.

Both were short in stature—faces heavily plastered with cosmetics—wrinkled. Both were bright eyed—peering around watching everyone. Both smoked constantly—one holding her cigarette between thumb and forefinger—brandishing it in the air—emphasizing her frequent remarks with jerky bird like movements. Both wore gaudy bright colored dresses.

Finally Joe's woman got up to go. She walked over to the cashier paid her check went out thru the revolving doors. As she passed by the huge plate glass windows—she turned—looking in the window and with a little girl like gesture—wig-wagged her fingers in farewell to her friend.

The woman who had remained—took out her lipstick carefully made up her mouth—lit another cigarette—looked over at me—and said—"You know —this ain't a bad joint. They got pretty good coffee—and they let you sit here as long as you like. I guess it don't look right for a lady to sit so long in a place—but you know something—mister—I hate to go home."

4.

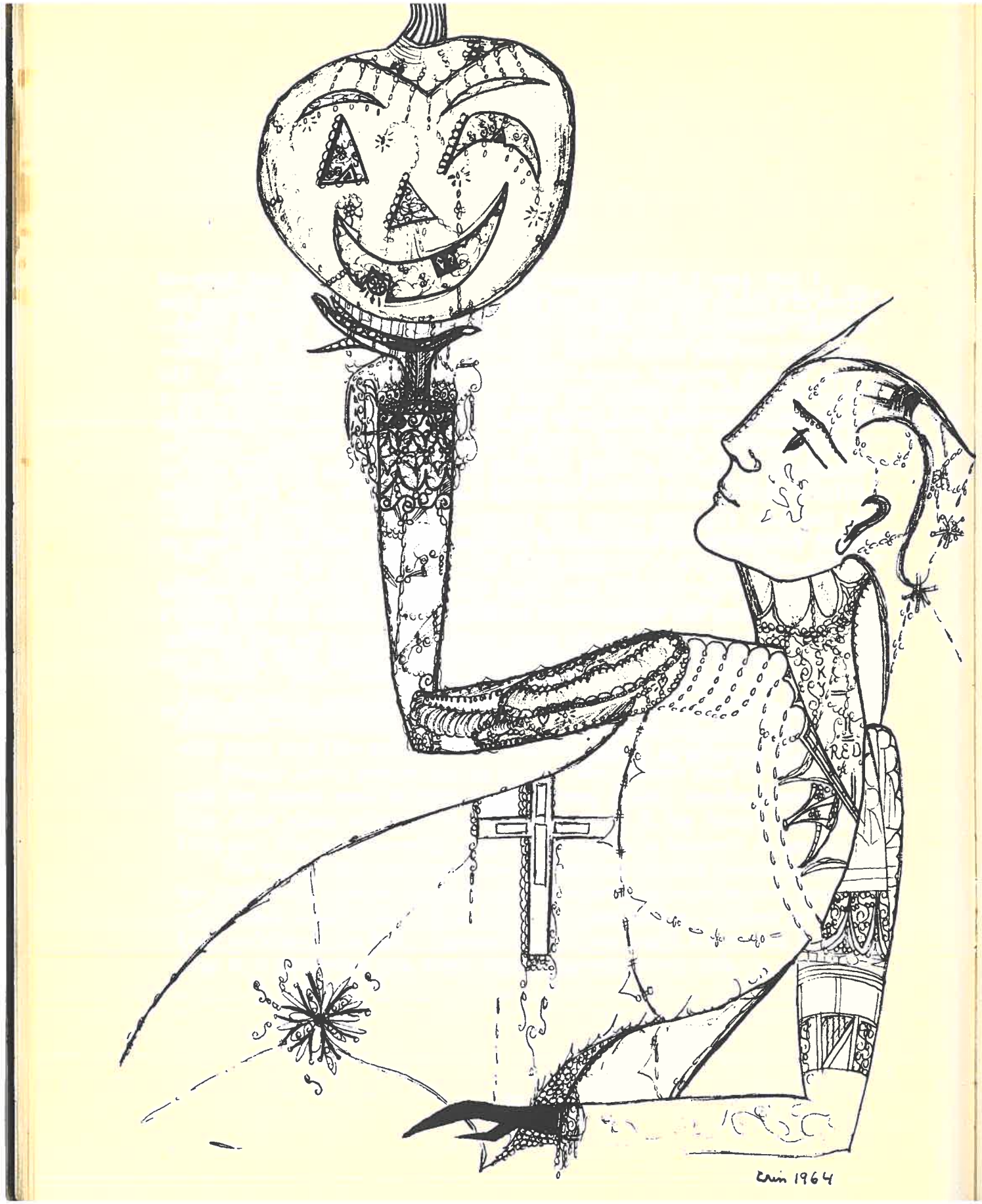
I just saw a sad humorous scene. Two men—shabby and dirty—in front of a liquor store. One man was standing perfectly still—looking like a huge mechanical doll that had just run down—one arm slightly lifted—the other hanging stiffly at the side—the head turned a bit to the side—eyes staring straight ahead—unblinking—the face expressionless. The other man walking—toward the man standing—in short jerks—also like a mechanical doll with perhaps a defect in the mechanism—so after each jerky movement there was a pause before the next motion. First he would take a step—stop—cock his head to one side—blink his eyes once or twice—look downward—lift his hand—spread his fingers—peer at the change he had been clutching—close his fingers—let his hand fall to his side—stand motionless his face blank of expression—then take another step or two—pause and go thru a repetition of the same gestures as before.

I stopped and watched him cross the sidewalk to his friend—extend the hand holding the change—open it—dropping the money into his friend's coat pocket—assume almost the same position as that of the man standing.

They stood next to each other without speaking—the only sign of life in either one the occasional blinking of the eyelids.

I watched them for a full ten minutes and neither changed position or gave any indication of being aware of one another.

They may still be standing.



Hallowe'en

Halloween two years ago—the first following a four year incarceration in a N.Y. State prison and shortly after release represented in a sense the beginning of a whole new scope of awareness for me. Prior to the aforementioned period except when very young—my early teen years—I made a point of remaining removed from the obviously Bohemian world of open rebellion—pointed non conformity—studio gatherings—fireplaces—all night discussions—political and religious—psychology—stupidity—parental and commercial—unique out of the way eating spots and complete sexual freedom—the intelligentsia and knowing about art—visually—auditorially—poetically—who was saying great and ponderous things—in novels—plays and any form of the written word—the theater—the dance and music. Instead I lived in middle class environments as indifferent to middle class standards as though they failed to exist. I lived aimlessly surrounded in the beginning with all the smart-sets—callow—empty—glittering nothingness eventually becoming the typical cosiological leech. My main desire being supported lavishly—expensive clothes—an automobile—long and sleek—preferably a convertible—a Doberman-pincer sitting next me—the top down—a beautiful woman—fashionably gowned—travel and debauchery on international scale—my commodity in exchange—my body. Unfortunately there were few buyers and those far from able to supply any of the extremely choice luxuries I wanted. Also—I soon learned I was unable to restrain myself sufficiently to give the impression that I was rare enough to merit high price—and could be had as easily for nothing—as long as the stimulants were many and in plenty and there was much laughter and I was free of even the slightest degree of responsibility. There were of course

innumerable causes for my attitude all outside consideration and it was only me alone and again faced with the constant problem of having a need of the basic requirements—food—shelter—and ordinarily presentable clothing—who became aware of my self loathing—gradually becoming obsessed with the desire for death and an escape from the rest of my fellow creatures—aware intensely again and again—of how beautiful the world is—and of my maladjustment and despicability—knowing how completely unworthy I was of even a glimpse of the sheer marvel of a delicately hued flower—the glow of the sunrise—the white beauty of the moon—the wonder of the sea—a tree—a rock—a blade of grass.

Soon I became a thief—no longer desirous of prostituting my body and discovering it was far simpler to sneak around here and there taking things I could convert into money—or money—and except for perhaps working with a partner—no need to deal in a so-called personal way with other people. I was free to become more obscure—sinking closer to what I soon believed is basic reality awakened originally with the aid of magic opium. Always there had been the opiates—heroin—morphine—dilaudid—pantipan and it was thru their mysterious chemical magic—I became truly conscious of God—the world and the great wonder of life and when all else failed to stir my inner being—the quick fix—again revealed the splendor—giving me reason to live until death. Nor has there been a change. It is still from the exquisite beauty of the poppy I seek solace.

As I became a thief and less concerned with surface evaluations the—opinions of the majority—recognizing only a few friends—and not always sure of them—learning at the same time—of the world of the spirit—linking me—all of us—together—it not mattering our outer hulk—only in this world—this life—beginning to sense the oneness of the inner force—observing the drive and what became to me the direction of the individual entity toward the "is" of life—feeling instinctively—and with assurance—all becomes the one God—the one indestructible force—power—energy—drive—call it what you choose—or by any word—I became more fully aware of a sense of peace. It is true I did not like being a thief—but then neither did I like the idea of being respectably a slave—a wage earner—an eight in the morning to five in the evening—drudge and somehow didn't see myself as more objectionable—in the final analysis—than the corrupt politician—the money hungry lawyer—doctor—boss or company man. The task master who says—"Do it this way—or lose your job. What do I care if your children are without necessities—or you can't pay your bills—the rent—buy food. The job has to be done." Or the cop who accepts a bribe today and

arrests tomorrow. Or the man of the church who leches after young boys—or girls—and blesses with one hand holding out the other for silver. Or the man who sells the slogan of lies about—bad breath—body odor—the decided advantages of one brand of the same bread over another of identical mixture. Or the man who sells the twenty-five cent bottle of chemical distillation called wine to the alcoholic who needs a drink of good whiskey—not synthetic beverage—or the man who lauds whiskey and votes to send the narcotics addict to jail.

And finally as a thief I became a prisoner and served my time and came out of prison and two years ago—once again saw a few of the very few people I had learned respect of before my being sentenced.

They—those of them—creative and basically honest—at least as they understood honesty—had moved forward and had started speaking aloud—and had written great poems and books—and the world had made a place for them—because of their beauty and fineness and because they are beautiful and good they were kind in their knowledge of me and welcomed me back—and now part of Bohemia—asked me to join them attending several halloween parties and I accepted.

It was good to be back with people interested and actively engaged in creative work—believing in a new sense of inner value—inner value in this instance referring to God and love and openness and a search for peace—both individually and collectively.

Everyone—or almost everyone I met—that occasion—seemed fine and good and it was with a sense of pride and humility I learned many of them knew of me thru some of my writing and references and stories told by one or two knowing me and having spoken of me.

This as I mentioned earlier began a new period in my life—and I have become a bit of a figure in the New York bohemian scene. A great deal has occurred not only to me but in the world in general during the last two years. I have grown wearier of my life and am anxious to make the big transition. I want to die—not becuase I especially dislike life but mostly because—I have grown rather old and am tired.

And as for the world—there is even more talk of bombs—bigger bombs—better bombs—larger stockpiles of bombs—newer concepts of bombs—and more decided challenges. Threats—and open defiance.

There is also some talk of peace—but it is mostly submerged beneath references to dust fallout—atomic destruction machine—and possible active war.

Yesterday's headlines—our great American president states—"We now

have sufficient bomb power to blow Russia off the face of the earth."

Enough of heat—breeding hate—resenting each other—we need more love.

There is of course the possibility—in order for us to truly evolve into something worth while—beyond our meager little niche in the inconceivable vastness of the universe—we have—like the Phoenix—to end in fire—and be reborn of the ashes.

October 31, 1961

Peter

I just finished eating Peter and washed him down with beer—lager beer. He was tender and juicy—succulent—sugar cured and lean.

I swallowed his heart whole. Sucked his bones—clean leaving them in a pile—neatly stacked—marrowless.

Of his hair I'll weave a silken jerkin—a scarf—to wrap around my throat and a sash.

Of his bones I'll build a bed—spend hours lying upon it—dreaming—his skull a pillow for my head—the birds will come there and find me dead.

They will peck me tearing tiny morsels of flesh. Some will fly away—dropping me into the sea—for fish. The sun will dry me out and the wind scatter flakes of dust over the earth.

Slowly our bones will pulverize as we gradually become powdery—the rain blending us together—washed across the earth in tiny rivulets—seeping down to the roots of the trees—grass—flowers.

They will find our skulls—the last to go—clasped jaw to jaw—in caricature of a kiss.

Phill

Phill smiled beguilingly tonight—asking me when I would write about him. At the time I didn't know. Giving the idea a little thought I decided —without doubt—Phill would be written about. It is not my stick—or long suit—habit to attempt a definition or description of a new acquaintance—but I would at least in this instance say his name and maybe exert a little effort to describe him.

He is a rather straight cat who has found or finds drugs a kick to him. He is young and married and a father.

There is difficulty with his home arrangements primarily because his wife becomes afraid there will be no home—and becomes annoyed when he does things he is interested in—sure that he is up to no good. I have only surmised these are the details—and am sure—if these aren't it—there is something else about the same level—causing irritation. He has spoken of his wife and child several times and is deeply concerned with their situation now and what it might become. He relaxes—spends money —picks up on any of several stimulants—so to speak—he likes—digs a little sex and is filled with remorse and talks of giving the scene up altogether. I rather wish he would although I am not at all convinced he will.

He has a beautiful face and I am aware of good things when he smiles. His face is sad sometimes or has a slightly impish quality. He is certainly physical and sex is a major point with him. Much of this is reflected in his face—especially the eyes. His body appears to be free and graceful. There is of course his conscious masculinity and the degree of masculinity he is unaware of possessing. He is an attractive young man.

I like hearing him talk although I am never exactly sure of the

direction it will take. He has a fairly positive code of ethics—which is bad enough but accompanied with doubt—misgivings—and being unsure—it is absolutely nothing. He has made it on the scene a couple of times. I like him.

He has been kind to me and several times been uncomfortable but determined to remain and accept or believe in what is happening. Like Noah —there is the sanitary—or simply ordinary caution—and the quality perhaps of a jewish tie difficult to break away from. Both Noah and Phill—in some ways are alike—in a sense—or in most of the other ways glaringly different.

Phill would like and does like sharp clothes. He should have extensive wardrobe—big cars and a lot of money. Oh! for the proverbial—playboy existence—all good—but there is always the sad cat on the outside.

Phill could without doubt issue orders and all would be smooth. Follow the leader and you could be sure of making it—deviate a fraction and the powerful hand of the infringed upon or there is no money—what can he do. Anyway vocation becomes a hang-up—some were going and some remain. Except for those he had chosen—perhaps it would be fine if he had some hounds-tooth slacks. One day he is least in anticipation—and of course that is the day everything falls upon the scene. Perhaps he will get with it next time.

He talks very hip and is hip but stupidly I had thought on the strength of what he said—something could happen—and now somehow I know—there will be frustration for him—for his wife—and the family bit in general.

Yet—his family—a good home—car—landscape in Brooklyn or wherever—would pacify him. If he wants home life and children—otherwise what is he doing—and no responsibility is attached—fist fight—or cock fight. He always gets back to the way—he invariably has what he needs and wants.

He is a quiet cat who silently dreams the future home—and all necessary his wife and child be happy. He talks of takes and hustles and sometimes an easy buck—and he also collects exceptionally good money when he is employed as a plumber. I prefer believing there are only a few—if any takes—nor has he any particular pet plan or scheme—this has absolutely no mud slinging. He can smoke his pot—make his gig—and be thru for all night. Harold Goldfinger knows how weary I've become—always been.

(new entry)

It seems I lost track again and automatic writing took over. This is very strange. I can only ask to be believed. I am not sure I will be

believed although unquestionably there are those who will try and believe me and will. As close as I am capable of understanding what takes place is—I am in a semi high state—between half awareness and half unconscious behavior—perhaps half fallen asleep. Yet—I can remember back in each instance thus far—a concern with what was written—a sort of perplexity. My habit of not reading or rather of ignoring of the manner of speech or wording—my writing—and letting it alone until later—or seldom changing it even then—has proven of good to me. It is a rather frightening experience—realizing there is a period when you have only vague awareness of your consciousness of the time knowledge—or the moments you were writing something you believed to be an ordinary continuation of your story—theme—or subject—discovering upon reading—if it is a continuation it is not in the usual sense and in all probability is an outcropping of strange thought patterns developed without restriction or conscious effort—simply an effect a result of cause you knew nothing of or understand now it has occurred. I am satisfied in a sense with what is written. It seems impressive. I desire having the experience as frequently as possible. I do not know how to bring it about and can only hope it will be a steady occurrence. Apparently it is a combination of everything within the moment—the atmosphere—the light—the shade—the temperature—each emotional registration—the nuances and connotation of tone—of sound—all, to the least stirring of the air. I cannot explain.

(new entry)

Phill called yesterday and said he might fall over—maybe cop some boo. I didn't encourage him and he didn't arrive. Again today about noon he called and said he'd like to get some schmeck. I suggested he call me a little later at Margo's—I told him I had spoken with her and she had mentioned a cat's name who was visiting her I knew to be using a little shcmeck and maybe I could do him some good. He asked how much it would cost. I told him six dollars. He then said something about a chick asking him to get her some pot—a tendollar bag and she told him he was to take a good cut. It sounded good and I rather liked the idea of money entering the scene.

It failed to work out as I had hoped. He called later and everything seemed practical—the cat said he would cop for Phill—and Phill came on over. He sat around most of the afternoon—listening to conversation of no interest to him—waiting for the cat to call. The cat had cut out to meet a friend of his—but had promised to get in touch and then failed to do so. I saw him much later and he apologized for not calling saying something about loss of time hanging him up—he was sorry but he knew I could

understand. Phill had finally grown weary of the whole scene and cut into a chick he knows who straightened him. I returned to Erin's and he came by. He was zonked and wanted to nod off in the apartment. I reasoned with him explaining it simply could not be done—also I wanted to make sure Margo would get rest—and the only way I could be sure—was for me to take her home. I told him to go to Noah's and wait for me. He did go to Noah's—I did take Margo home—but he did not wait for me and when I went to Noah's there was no one there. I met both of them later on the street. Phill was still high. He was annoyed—and suddenly said—"I am going home." He walked away—his back very straight—stepping along very carefully—never looking back.

Frisky

The last few weeks—on occasion I've had reason to visit—Deo and Jimmy's pad on Bleecker St. Keyto an oriental cat about forty or forty five years of age actually set the place up originally and still lives there with Deo and Jimmy. It is a strange place—consisting of three rooms—opening up from the front—intended as a store—above street level one flight up—and running to the back room—where at some point someone decided to make a sort of built in wall seat to run the full width of the back wall setting it back under a pair of arches that extend in front of it about three feet. To one side is a plain brick wall—with a huge iron pikestaff caught on it at an angle—opposite is a window looking out to the courtyard —with heavy red plush drapes—between these and the next window is a table a mirror hanging above it and a lamp with a japanese shade. Along the wall next the bare brick area is a large double studio couch—with end tables next a chest of drawers and a closet. The colors in the room are somber browns and dark greens and reds. There is an air of the old and decayed in the atmosphere and one would hardly be surprised to discover at least one haunted sister—palefaced—communing with the dead—or perchance a stuffed owl—burning candles and a coffin.

The front room with its store front packed with frames and stretchers —an old bench—the windows dirt laden never any daylight—is long and oblong in shape—the walls holding several wall plaques—and a number of very dull toned paintings in wide oak frames or in one or two instances tarnished gold. There is a divan and an overstuffed chair—a shaded light hanging from a cord just above. Between the front room and the back room is a small section containing shelves and a small washbasin—one step down from each of the rooms. Everything is old and worn—dusty and threadbare.

Apparently two or three weeks ago several young unusually beautiful

young girls began staying there along with Deo, Jim and Keyto. From what little I was able to learn of their background—they grew up together —all about the same age—the oldest 21 or 22 and the youngest 18. Trey—Pence—Barb—Dell—and Frisky. There is one other very beautiful child—fourteen—who occasionally falls in—stays a while—maybe turns on a shot of amphets and then disappears into the city outside.

Three nights ago—the night we—that is El Flower and myself—put Debra on the bus for her return trip to California—El and myself returned downtown to the location of the Catholic Worker's Headquarters—where we spent a short time speaking with a friend of El's and then leaving—El suggesting we try and cop a bag of horse—asking me if I knew where we might accomplish same. I immediately thought of Keyto. We walked over to the Bowery at Delancey and headed up toward Bleecker. Enroute we ran into Nikola and a friend of his. I spoke briefly with Nikola who said he was headed to Keyto's—to pick him up there. We followed closely behind—entering and saying hello to everyone—El acknowledging introductions—his eyes lighting up at the scene—darting around the rooms observing the girls. Frisky was half reclining on the divan talking to a young cat —Jerry—I had only seen once before. Everyone else was located in the back room. As we entered Deo raised up and asked if either of us had any amphets. When we said no he sighed and fell back down—grumbling about not having turned on all day—"Wow—all these people cutting in and out—this ain't no shooting gallery." Nikola and his friends were busy getting straight—cooking their shit. Barb was in the process of getting dressed and at the moment was applying some kind of eye make up. Pence had moved over to watch Nikola. I sat down in a chair facing the couch. Trey was curled up alongside Deo. Looking toward the back I saw Tom Keyto apparently sleeping on the wall seat—a spread of some kind—partially obscuring him from view—hung in one of the arches. Deo was still muttering unintelligible sounds—every other grunt or snort taking on form such as—amphets—tired—chaos—confusion—too many people.

Suddenly—looking directly at him—I said—"Hey man—are you complaining because I fell in? If you don't want me cutting in—all that is necessary is you say so." He answered me saying—"Well you know—Huncke—it isn't you—exactly—but strangers." I answered immediately saying—"Are you referring to Flower? Wow—he's good people. Not only that—I am usually careful—who I introduce—and to who I introduce. Also—there are few people—on this point—any cooler—than me." Deo said—"I know—man." Just then Pence spoke up saying—"It's just—Deo doesn't want so many people falling in at once." I didn't say anything—looking the scene

over—thinking—fuck these people—or how hung up can they get. If I'd had amphets—nothing at all would have been mentioned other than—"Great—can we turn on? Have you enough—so we can all get a shot?"

Meanwhile El spoke to Nikola asking him if as soon as he had finished—he would cop a bag of schmeck for us. Nikola said yes. Just then Jimmy walked by and looking at me said—"You look annoyed Huncke." I didn't answer. El turned to me and began questioning me about whether or not I trusted Nikola. I started to say—"Yes, of course" and then it occurred to me the whole routine was pretty fucking stupid. "Shit no—I don't trust anybody—there ain't no mother fucker alive—I believe in—everybody stinks." Jimmy interrupted to say—"What's the matter man?" I replied—"Nothing—except people—fuck people. The more I know of them the less I want to be around them." At the moment I was irritated with Deo and his whole stupid attitude. It annoyed me—he should dare have opinions of me—especially since he knew me not at all personally—and was only mouthing things he had heard said.

Nikola finished shooting up—picked up the money from El and cut out—saying he'd be back as soon as possible. After he left his friend came over and joined us—saying his name was "Johnny Wells". He began telling us of himself and of how he had just beaten a federal rap. It had taken two years and a lot of money. The talk became general—everyone speaking of one thing or another—mostly of drugs. Someone mentioned having turned on synthetic cocaine the night before—also making a comment about wishing some were available at the moment. Before leaving downtown El had thrown me a large bag containing just what they were talking about. El looked at me and said—"You got it with you—man?" I nodded yes and he spoke aloud—saying—"Look I don't know what the stuff is—but Huncke and I have something that is supposed to be artificial or synthetic coke—if you want to use some—you're welcome." Deo jumped up and said—"Yes man—I would sure appreciate shooting some up." Johnny Wells asked to see the stuff—saying he'd like to try a little—asking me if I was going to shoot some also. I really don't like the idea of synthetic anything—much less cocaine—but I was feeling nervous and it occurred to me—possibly I'd get a lift. I said "Yes—in fact—let me go first." I'd had some experience with it once or twice before and knew just about what to put in the spoon. I cooked up—drew the stuff into the dropper and shot up. For a moment nothing and then the strange freezing sensation in my mouth—the tip of my tongue and around the gums feeling slightly numb—and then a momentary rush to the pit of my stomach. I felt a bit ill for a moment and then all was well. Everyone was watching me. They began asking

questions about whether or not I felt it—if I liked it—if it was good? I shrugged my shoulders saying—"Yes—no—it is O.K.—not really great—just a slight rush—over with now—nothing is happening." Barb said—"You look happy—I'm going to try some." Meanwhile Johnny Wells had taken over and was in process of preparing himself a fix. He proceeded to take off—saying after he had removed the needle—"Man I don't feel anything." Deo was next—then Barb. Pence and Jimmy went out for soda and cigarettes. El was getting restless. He had an appointment at the Metro coffee house he didn't want to miss. He said for me to wait for Nikola and we would meet later at Noah's and Paul's. As he was walking toward the front Frisky passed him—asking if it would be alright for her to take a little shot too. El answered—"Of course" and she came on through into the back room. As she passed me she smiled—then stopped a moment—extending her hands to me—she said—"Let's see how strong you are. Here put up your hands." I took both her hands in mine and we each exerted strength and pressure—to see which could force the other to bend their arms. She was quite strong. We both began laughing. "You're stronger than I thought"—I said. She looked pleased. Suddenly she withdrew her hands and moved over to the table with the works and the stuff. She paused a moment before the mirror—pulling her dress into position—fluffing her long black hair a little around her ears—twisting one way and then the other in order to see herself at different angles. She was half smiling looking pleased. Johnny Wells was sitting at the table and she asked him to please fix her a shot. She continued standing fussing with her appearance—putting lipstick on—smoothing it down on her mouth with her little finger—brushing a light coating of mascara onto her eyelashes. She was wearing a bright turquoise blue dress—trimmed with orange and black bands around the neck and the bottom of the skirt. She had low cut dark blue sneakers on her feet and bent down to unloosen the laces of one which she kicked off—grimacing and remarking about a blister on the back of her heel. Johnny had prepared her shot and she sat down to tie up. Seeing her for the moment the thought flashed through my mind—perhaps she shouldn't take very much—if any—and then was gone. I was still very annoyed with Deo and besides—apparently they all had been shooting together for quite some time and she probably knew what she was doing. Also—Nikola was overdue and I was becoming bugged waiting. Barb was sitting opposite me and Pence and Jimmy had just returned with bottles of coca cola and packages of cigarettes.

I saw Barb looking in the direction of Frisky and Johnny suddenly stiffen—a look of fright on her face. As I turned to look I heard her gasp

and let out a little scream. I saw Frisky raise up half way out of the chair she had been sitting in—fling her arms out stiffly—throw her head back—spin to one side and fall to the floor in a state of convulsive spasms—her whole body rigid and quivering. Johnny leaped from his seat and Jimmy rushed across to her side—calling her name—bending down—they began trying to lift her—turning her first to one side then the other. The girls all began talking at once making suggestions. Everyone started moving around. The two fellows succeeded in lifting her off the floor and moving her onto the couch or the bed where one on either side they tried holding her down. She was breathing in gasps from deep in her throat through gurgling saliva. She was choking on the bile accumulated in her throat. Every now and then she would partially come to and strain to raise up—her eyes wide open staring straight ahead. They continued to hold her in position until she would pass out again.

Meanwhile Keyto had leaped from his bed—thrown on his hat and coat and rushed out presumably to try and find out what the antidote for the stuff might be. Barb and I had collected the works together. I arranged mine and placed them in my pocket. I had tried to make several suggestions about how to handle the girl and was either not heard or simply ignored—and besides—I was not at all sure what should be done. Jimmy had called me a couple of times asking me if I knew exactly how to handle the situation and all I could reply was—no.

I decided to leave. I spoke quietly to Barb—asking her to please let me out and close and lock the door after I left. Barb was shaken and her eyes were filled with tears. "They should try and let her cough up the bile and saliva" she said. "She is choking this way and no one will listen to me." There was nothing I could say except—"Don't worry baby—she'll be alright." As Barb let me out she repeated her statement and said "I know I'm right." I told her to take care and stepped out onto the street. I walked straight home to the apartment to find El already there and waiting. I explained what had happened and he became upset—exclaiming "Oh man—what a drag—wow—that poor chick."

In a short time the three girls—Trey, Pence and Barb—arrived across the hall at Margret and Nikola's saying as they came in—"She is dead." I was shocked and asked them to explain about what had happened after I left. They told me that finally Keyto and Nikola who had returned helped get her into a taxi. Her pulse had stopped beating and she had turned blue. Someone had called a policemen explaining she had committed suicide. I don't know any further details except she was reported a suicide and dead on arrival.

The Magician

Winds are still. Heat hangs heavy and oppressive. Low grey clouds illuminated by the lights of the city seemingly glow in the night sky. A dog howls somewhere the next block over. The night is haunted. September demons chitter and chatter. Stair steps creak and moan with weight of evil forces ascending six flights up to gain entrance to the three rooms of my dwelling. Each room contains individual shadows teeming with the spawn of black magic. A purple taper burns a flickering flame casting unsteady light.

My nerve ends are exposed and raw. Each minute sound sends waves of sticky warmth through my being. I am sure the magician approaches. He has planned the instant of unleaching his power be drenched in blood. He has selected me to release the flow. I did reject and received vitriol. He placed symbols required to fill my heart with sharp pain. He cried fool—accusing me of benevolence—then whispered the pit black words rich with magic force—appointing me his executioner. I did not understand his interest in me—when first he began giving me freely of the crystal clear elixir and I was as one reborn. I listened to his flute voice rise in early dawn light—he alone—and I allowed to walk by his side. This in early spring—the morning stirring with gentle faintly warm wind—while the city around us began discarding the drab soot polluted winter colors—replacing them with bright blue—red—yellow—and all the gay pastels of spring promise. I but realized his magical capabilities. He began revealing himself in the role of a lover—selecting a fine beautiful young woman I also loved—to create beautiful magic truths for and asking her to share

his search for truth—at the start—gentle—patient—kind—carefully explaining the complexities—demanding only truth from her but not always believing. Still in the beginning he would listen and understand and approve and smile and speak in detail to great length, about beauty—purity—white magic. Then as he watched her belief strengthen—grow—accept—learned her strength—observed the completeness of her innocence—he sensed the depth of his evilness and became frightened—feeling confident much of evil within himself must be matched in others and she surely must contain her share. And besides all honey and no spice—who in hell—did she think she could kid.

So gradually he began releasing his black power—finally calling her ugly—a liar—a dirty—selfish bitch—resorting in his frustration to absorb entirely—her true essence of beauty—to slapping—pinching—kicking—stealing her food—very nearly chaining her to his side—never permitting her to leave his presence—screaming foul names—hating her because she retained her greatness—and more so because he began losing his as he revealed his insecurity—his smallness and inability to exist independently of her or anyone else he might fortunately have drawn to his orbit. His potential as a magician—a creator—became less until even his loyalest followers began turning their backs—shutting their doors—hardly interested in his continued existence. He decided on extinction—annihilation—suicide. His plan was to have himself killed—cause as much dissension—confusion and general discomfort as possible.

I had followed closely his relationship with our mutual love—seldom making even a vague effort to interfere. She kept me informed of her feelings at all times and I felt quite certain she deserved the respect of being allowed to decide for herself when or if ever she desired leaving him. He had woven magnificent and intricately created magic worlds for her private observation. She had witnessed complete opposites of the same truth and knew it to retain the same truth. New and greater depths of reality became hers and she learned the world filled with magic.

His beauty and creative ability had been so fine—when he began changing—she was unable to accept the change as coming from him—believing instead herself to be at fault. It was when he became increasingly violent her first doubts about his greatness took root.

Up to the point where it was impossible to be in their presence when they weren't bickering—he making accusations—she on the defensive—he threatening—screaming names at her—nymphomaniac—whore—cunt—sex freak—striking out at her—she flinching anytime he moved toward her—I had stayed clear except to try and reason—and a few occasions hold on to

him in an effort to keep him from hitting her again.

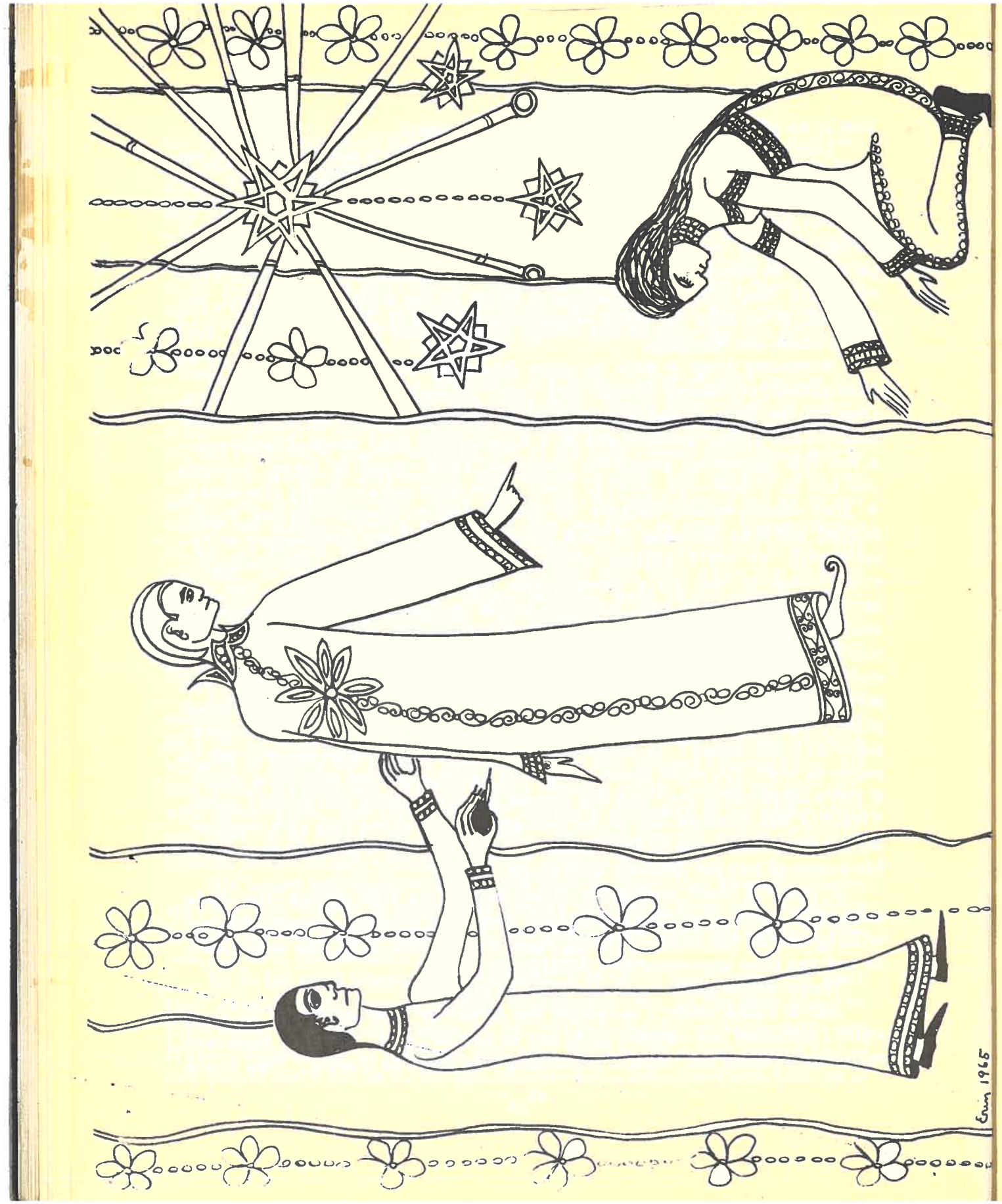
I am something of a coward and short of stark tragedy I couldn't see any way of breaking up their relationship. Also—a number of other considerations were—at the time—not to be ignored. Nevertheless—I did decide—at the first chance I'd get her away long enough to break the chain of thought—giving her an opportunity to obtain an accelerated varied change process. In order to accomplish so radical a break in the pattern—considerable functioning on principle of being on the alert was required, the moment propitious to leave—depart—scram—split—take off. It arrived two o'clock one morning.

Returning from a walk on moon drenched—ruby red stop lights lined intermittently—Avenue C—the city livid almost in crystal brightness. Opening the door of the apartment my glance became arrested on her beauty—she sitting crosslegged on a huge square four peopled mattress—a low flat appearing somewhat functional table—made of three drawers one top to a desk—the several other units used satisfactorily elsewhere. A grey—beige—black—shades of black—demon shaped—African figure shaped patterns seeming at first glance devoid of any consistency or relationship, an early magical creation from the organic inks—iodines—violets—one of his early possessions was used as a spread. She was stretching forward a tiny Japanese brush stained black purple—toward a small crock or jug. She looked at me intently a moment slightly bent forward—her long gold brown hair hanging over the sides of her face. She suddenly laughed—rocked gently over to the side—dipped the brush and straightened up making calligraphic symbols on a large piece of oatmeal paper. Again—stopping abruptly—she looked directly into my face—asking—"Are you happy? Is everything alright—Have I spoken harshly—or in anger to you? You must never worry—or brood about my appearing angry. It can't happen with you" and she started her painstaking calligraphy again, Vivaldi's The Seasons was on the phonograph—tuned to a fine rich medium. My big black cat came in thru the fire escape balcony window stirring with his sweep of tail the Chinese wind glass.

A wave of alert perception filled each of us with smiles—the whole thing was funny—ringing tingling—the waves of activity—opening doors—walking across the room—rustling papers—no sound from the magician—he had had busy day—everyone wanting curses.

There were—these—and now there is none.

And it came about I arranged the first rift between them. He slept while I abducted her—encouraging her to see as I saw. Still she remained reluctant to leave him without explaining why she was leaving. This would



have created additional confusion and at that point to be avoided.

She was finally persuaded against her will to attempt a short trip out —into the country.

I felt considerably relieved about the danger threatening her but was somewhat skeptical of how he could make the adjustment. His rages of anger and perplexity were intermingled so completely I began immediately feeling confident of his basic goodness. Almost sure the evidences of evil I had observed were my own projections. He was extremely humble and began declaring his love for her to everyone. His promises of how he would work only for a future happiness of us all were many and profuse. Life was unthinkable without her—he had done great things in the beginning and would be even greater in the future. He had to have her by his side.

And she returned quickly—more radiant and beautiful than I had ever known her—anxious to forget past behavior and begin working toward a world of miracles—a world filled with magic.

Her eyes had been opened—and as he began slipping back into his demonic habits she was aware and began rebuffing him—until he became desperate and again raised his hands—stamping his feet—snarling and glaring—screaming and threatening. Their lives filled with dissension—and although he called on all his powers they failed him. He could not submerge her beauty nor detract from her basic innocence.

Soon she began observing new people more intently taking in the scene. He could use all his tricks—he would never again be able to convince her of anything—unless she wanted to believe. Still he retained one powerful hold. She was learning magic and there were still many symbols he could teach her.

He became amazingly ugly in appearance. His smile false—his voice hollow and empty. He was always moving around—never still. He had always been a thief—nothing big—small things—preferably with sentimental value to the owner. One couldn't take him visiting—he was sure to take things. At this point—not only was he stealing—but he became possessive about things he wanted personally accusing everyone of what he himself was guilty. He became a living embodiment of contradictions. He was desperate.

It was much too late. He lost completely what influence he had built up and there was no possibility of establishing anything worthwhile.

It was about this time he hit upon the idea of having me kill him. He wanted death and what better way to bring it about—than to have me cause it.

I had never tangled with him physically other than in brief skirmish and he knew it would require a great deal of agitation to cause me to become violent but—and this is important, he also knew, brought to the point of violence—I would have practically no control. All I would need would be a knife.

She has been away the last few days and he has been wandering the streets. He is rather to be pitied.

Now he slowly climbs the stairs seeking the end. I have half decided to do it. He'll knock—I'll ask who it is—he'll reply at the same time demanding I open the door—I can open the door—stick him and it will be done but this is really too final. I think I have something better—something he will live with the rest of his life. He'll have to find someone else for his dirty work. I have in my hand an eyedropper filled with a slow acting poison and a hypodermic needle specially dipped in a germ infested solution containing the hepatitis bug.

Meanwhile the girl and I have recently planned we can sail on the Scandanavian ships together. She can become a stewardess and I can take anything. Sounds great.

I'll open the door—I am calm and ready. He isn't sure of what to expect. I can see him as he turns on the last step. His eyes are dull and glazed. His hair stands on end—his clothes are filthy—he is tired. He tries to appear sinister. In one hand he carries a flute and in the other his book of symbols. As he comes closer he begins pleading with his eyes for anything—it doesn't matter what—death—an hour's rest—a change of clothing—I open the door wide—the candle flame dances wildly for a moment—caught in the draft—he enters and as he turns to look around I plunge the needle into his flesh. His eyes fill with horror—he tries to struggle but I have already thrown a head lock on him—also the dropper is almost empty.

It is over and he sits staring into space. He has cursed me with any curse and all curses.

We are laughing because we neither of us she and I exist in a reality. We are figments of his imagination. And anyway his imagination has had it and we are moving on to new environment.

There will be no more black magic from him—he is finished. Already he turns saffron.

I can hear the boat whistles from where I live. On a foggy morning they seemingly call to each other ceaselessly. Some are near and loud and strident. Others pick up the call until finally off in the distance there is only a faint tone barely heard. Sometimes they sound simultaneously. One can pick out the riverboat, the tug—the ocean going steamers—little boats all talking to each other helping create the opening music of a New York morning.

The whistles are silent tonight.

Beware of Fallen Angels

I remember the scene—fully—able this instant to see both Elise and Bill vividly—their clothing—their faces—their posture—their particular area wherein the whole distance between them was almost split dead center—the essence of their individual selves meeting at that point and neither would give way—the way of Elise's of sitting and the way of Bill's half crouch—his left buttock resting on the heel of his left foot—the right leg bent downward at the knee—the foot flat on the floor acting as balance—myself in a straight back chair—watching and listening.

The setting was strangely beautiful—a quality of the unreal about it as of perhaps of new dimension. Color alive and glowing was everywhere. Reds deep hued and warm to faintest pink and flame—blues almost black and shaded thru pale to peacock—yellow—orange—green—violet—umber—mud tones and clear pure light. Huge squares of heavy drawing paper worked on with blue and red ink—applied by brush in a seemingly casual manner rapidly—by Bill—held chunks of a blue and red jungle from another world—filled the recesses of the front windows. Streamers a foot wide and of varying lengths from two feet to six feet of a parchment like material—containing one area after another of every conceivable color shade and tone within which faces took shape before the eye—hung like Chinese banners here and there thru out the two rooms. A huge square of cloth stained in shades of violet and red—spots of palest green and larger sections of black—the center a large mandala—the rest moving out from it—animal shapes or Tibetan monks—standing alone—in groups—at prayer or worship—was stretched taut over one wall filling it nearly to capacity. Beneath it on the floor were two mattresses one on top of the

other—spread with an Indian patterned blanket of light and dark green—and an afghan shawl in all colors. A set of shelves holding books sat between the two windows at the foot of the bed while along the wall opposite the hanging all remained bare but for a small handcarved wooden chest—probably Italian workmanship—holding two or three brass bowls and trays and a photograph of Marcel Marceau in grease paint and dressed as a sort of harlequin. At the head of the bed beneath one end of the hanging—a large square shaped portable phonograph capable of deep tonal and volume control—sat—a record of mid eastern tea house songs on the turn-table—the strange notes and increasing tempo electrifying the air with rhythmic vibrations. A brass Buddha sat upon a black wood block at one side of the opening between the two rooms a thin veil of lavender grey smoke from a clay pot holding incense eddying upward wreathed the head. Next the pot of incense were two bowls one wooden the other copper—containing rocks and colored stones—beads in all colors—several odd shaped gold plated figurines—chunks of wood—two or three strips of fur—and several phial shaped bottles with frosted glass stoppers. A book on witchcraft and the Tibetan Book of the Dead had been placed alongside the bowls and the whole group of objects appeared like offerings upon an alter to a pagan God. It was here Bill had stationed himself—halfcrouching—his hands moving about constantly—reaching toward a bottle of ink the color he wanted at the moment—holding it for a moment before unstoppering it—setting it back on the floor—picking up his flute—placing it to his lips—blowing several sharp notes that cut into the sounds coming from the phonograph—lowering it from his mouth—twisting it in his fingers—touching lightly with his hand the bands of silver wire bound round the body of the flute just above the mouthpiece of a silver ring screwed or forced into the end—replacing it finally where it became another item among his work materials scattered in front of him. Brushes—pens—knives—scraps of wire—bottles bound in colored cloth with seals of sealing wax holding it in place—or silk thread wound round the necks—needles—scraps of paper and cloth—several squares of pastel hued suede folded and stacked—a few sheets of rice paper in process of receiving visual creation—spread out so he could touch first one then the other—or splash color on them—or carefully execute a magic symbol in silver or gold paint or heavy black inks on the surface. He was never still—always changing things. He lit a black wax candle and selecting a fair sized grey rock—dropped hot wax on the top then set the candle in it until it cooled—then moved it next the Buddha almost behind him—the light from behind giving an affect of seemingly emanating from him—creating an aura of shimmering light around his head.

Directly opposite him on the other side of the room stood a huge refrigerator with a large bowl of fruit on top. Periodically someone of the three of us would open the door of this monster in search of food or more often to open the freezer section to take out one of the three bottles of amphetamine solution Bill had placed there after mixing and dissolving it carefully in accordance with his almost ritualistic formula. He had always believed in order amphetamine be at best there was a prescribed way of preparing it and that it should be allowed to freeze before it was used. I am inclined to accept his theory as I have never used amphetamine that gave me as much of a lift or was as much pleasure to take. Next to the refrigerator was a straight back chair with a profusion of clothing draped over the back and piled on the seat—coats sweaters—scarves—shirts—gloves and a hat. A table—square in shape with an India print on a red background—spread across the top and hanging down on all four sides almost to floor occupied the space next to the chair—the surface a conglomerate collection—of cups—spoons—ashtrays—saucers—salt and pepper shakers —matches—cigarettes—burning candles—one in a tall thin brass holder and another stuck in the top of a wine bottle the sides thick with melted wax drippings—a book of poetry opened and placed face down—here and there spools of bright colored silk thread—a small pair of scissors—innumerable small containers of pins—needles—and small objects of all kinds. At an angle facing the table yet able to observe the entire scene without changing position sat Elise—her long black hair loose and falling down her back to her waist—a faded blue shirt open at the throat pulled tight over her full breasts and blue jeans—without shoes—one leg stretched straight in front of her the foot just reaching the edge of the table cover which she was idly playing with by moving her toes—the other leg was raised and the foot rested on the edge of the round basket chair—occasionally she would bend her body forward and rest her chin on her knee. She was smoking chain fashion lighting each new cigarette from the stub of the last. Now and then she placed her cigarette in the corner of her mouth and let it stay while she stroked her leg with her hand or perhaps searched through the stuff on the table for something she wanted at the moment. She was in a highly tense state and angry with Bill. Now and then she would feel around beneath an orange colored cushion covering the seat—until locating a small envelope containing pot she would bring it out and pass it to me in order I would roll a stick or joint. Immediately above her head on the wall hung a large Japanese print of some God of children the composition done in delicate strokes of the artist's brush. On the same wall were two very delightful drawings done in watercolor by Lafcadio Orlovsky—one depicting

a carnival scene and the other a sort of cubistic pattern of triangular color forms. Across from her—I sat with my back to the door separated from Bill by a desk stacked with books, papers—portfolios—pencils—pens—a letter opener—paper clips—scotchtape—paste and glue—notebooks—letters opened and unopened and a red clay flower pot in which grew a tall avocado plant—rather graceful—the stem bare of leaves except near the top where there existed only a few but sufficient enough to cause a bending of the stem in such a way it appeared to resemble the pose of a dancer.

We all three had been together without interruption for at least five hours and it was now well into the early hours of morning. A strange sense of the mystical lay like a patina over the essence of our efforts to communicate. We were aware of each other separately yet always collectively in a manner of telepathic consciousness. The very air seemed vibrant with electrical particles. Two related and at the same time divergent view points had become focal centers for energetic discharges of thought in some instances assembled with minute attention to detail and balance of rationalization and frequently unleashed at the instant of conception. Bill believed in the power of magic and of the Phoenix Bird always arising from the holocaust of flaming destruction thusly did God accept all things including the dark forces and saint or sinner—devil or angel were the same. Buddha could lead one closer to the God force than anything produced by western concept. Sweetness—delicacy—innocence—girl and boy—poetry—home and personal possessions were abhorrent and to be sacrificed to action and creativeness and if all crumbled around one leaving them exposed—torn—hungry—homeless this was a cleansing and setting free and it meant nothing—one imagined personal suffering and should be glad of the opportunity to aid creativity. Magic was his tool and he would use it to help him create and no matter who or what was destroyed in the process. Elise held other beliefs to be true and strongly resented the evil she felt was the very life blood of Bill. She refused to see him—to look at his work—to accept the magic with trust and did not believe it to be true. At best he was a charlatan and unworthy respect. Hers was a God of wrath and there were saints and sinners—devils and angels and they were all around us. She was a jew and no one other than a jew could understand her. There was no meeting of mind, spirit or physical being possible between them. His words meant nothing—he used them only to try casting a spell—he wished only to bring harm and pain—his desires were base and smacked of the bestial. She loathed him and wanted him to leave. He was only a dabbler and as for beauty in his work she could not see it—finding it irritating and vulgar. She did not fear his power and

she had no desire to use his amphetamine because it was an evil drug destined to cause a knife between any two or for that matter group of people. He might mix his solutions so they became crystal clear—pour them into bottles of pale blue—lavender or green—clear glass or frosted—drop as many pebbles—and precious stones to rest at the bottom—as he chose—it was not a magic elixir. She moved about in the chair—both legs rested on the floor—her hands were clasped in front of her the elbows resting on her knees—her face turning full gaze upon Bill—a swift glance toward me and then darting here and there around the scene—then back to Bill and her eyes brown and sad and burning.

Bill returned the looking for a moment and then began moving objects within reach from one place to another—his head twisting side to side—his eyes darting about—finally he picked up his flute and began blowing—several test notes—his fingers moving and pressing over the openings of the sound or note control locations—suddenly hitting a sharp angry tone—blasting it out—it was shrill and piercing—full of complaint—almost hate. He stood up and reached for the refrigerator door—opened it—reached in and removed a dark blue bottle—and turned around saying—"I'm going to shoot up. Where are the works—I can't find my works." He put the bottle down on the floor as he started moving around—here—then into the next room—poking behind the books—feeling along the edge of the mattresses—rounding suddenly and pawing around the back of the chest—pushing the bowls aside—lifting the Marceau photograph—muttering under his breath—saying once—out loud—"There's something wrong—somebody is against me—where are my works—I put them down and they aren't where I put them"—glaring toward the wall—shifting to the Buddha—at me—at Elise—at the table top—the desk—the floor—gradually pacing across the full length of the two rooms—stopping in front of the stack of suede pieces—reaching down—and there were the works. He removed the stopper of the blue bottle—squeezed the pacifier on the end of his dropper sending air and drawing it back thru the needle and satisfied all was in working order—squeezed once again and holding it compressed set the end with needle down into the bottle—and let go. Slowly the crystal clear amphetamine solution filled the dropper until when a little more than three quarters full—Bill removed it and after holding it a minute—looked at me and said—"You want it first?" I had been waiting to take off again—not because I was down—but because I wanted to try and get higher and wanted to shoot up as soon as possible. I reached for the fix—dug out a square red bandana from a pocket—twisted it into a sort of rolled length and wrapping it around my arm as a tie or tourniquet—tucked the end in so it would hold—and holding my arm up—

looked for a spot to hit. My veins have never collapsed permanently and although there is scar tissue over the areas of my tracks I still have all kinds of spots I can hit without difficulty. I closed my fist—opened it—closed it several times and the veins of my arm stood out plainly. I picked one in about the center of my forearm—rested and adjusted my elbow until I obtained a balance and then hovering the point over the spot—began pressing and tapping it into the skin and toward the vein—touching it and with good luck the vein had been penetrated. Blood seeped up into the needle—into the dropper—forcing the solution to slowly rise. I was satisfied I had made a hit and again squeezing the top sent the blood back and the amphets into the vein. I felt it almost instantly and the rush to head like a short circuit. My body began to pulsate or grow tiny antennae all quivering in anticipation—and my aliveness took on new substance and was alerted to the waves of energetic forces sweeping around me. My personal force developed an awareness and it was as though I would receive communication at telepathic level. The surroundings—already capable of absorbing force—drive—spirit and the flow of magic sensed—almost felt—never seen—only the results of utilization had been conducive to all the nuances—or many. I was thoroughly elated. Finishing—briefly washing the works—handed them to Bill. He went thru much the same procedure of drawing up the stuff—the tie up and the actual shooting. He could absorb a large amount at one time—mainline—and turn on in a flash. He started doing his work.

Elise had sat thru the scene without comment. I asked her to turn on but she refused. She was playing with a handful of small items—two gold plated lead figures—of Indian or Tibetan Gods. A neatly patterned brass wire ornament—found in the street—several rings of silver and turquoise and lapis lazuli shaped or cut like an Egyptian scarab, her eyes had become dream filled and when she emptied her hands in a lacquer tea box—the many small trinkets—stones—unset jewels and strange objects—sort of clattered into the box. The box was hers and she didn't want Bill to touch. He offered her a shot of amphetamine and she refused. She turned on once in a while—preferring dilaudid—nembutal—seccies—and of the barbiturates—and best heroin. She was stimulated by amphets but didn't like the agitation and storm within oneself she had to contend with and it was only seldom she would take amphets.

Elise and Janine were sharing the expenses of rent etc. on the apartment. Janine came and went as she desired. She spent most of her time with Peter and Allen but mostly with Peter. Peter and Allen were almost ready to sail for India. There were three nights remaining and then they would be gone. Janine had met Bill and was fascinated. She had seen him

once or twice previously—once taking off with him. This was three nights before Peter was to leave and supposedly they were together—when unexpectedly the door swung open and, in she walked. She smiled at everyone and said hello. She said—"I'm going to see Peter later—he and Allen are visiting friends—I want a little amphetamine Bill please." Bill fixed a dropper and gave it to her. She turned to me asking me if I would perform the task for her. I said yes.

Both Elise and myself were pleased with Janine's presence. Once I looked up to observe what seemed to me—a rather speculative smile and glance on Bill's face—as he allowed his eyes to rove over the scene and rest a while on Janine. Perhaps in that moment he felt or knew they were doomed but had to come on—had to make a disgusting display of himself at complete cost of the night's opportunity—had to eventually make it an experience great and one to remember. Janine smiled toward Bill—sounding him in some way they rather had between them. Janine was genuinely touched by the genius of Bill—yet she felt a deep sympathy toward him—and a sadness because he was so at the mercy of people's whims as much as he held in contempt those not of his followers—refusing to concede even the slightest degree of his supposed freedom. His was a force both powerful and consuming and when surging thru his being—his face—his body all physical aspects of himself—became twisted and tortured visible to the observer yet denied vehemently and in foulest language. His true beauty lay within—with perhaps only his eyes betraying that it might be—until he began creating and his movement became fascinating to watch—his verbal outbursts—partially incantations—melodious to the ear with an air of the mystic and magical and one could easily be caught in the spell—until at the last—either one of his exquisite hangings lay open before you—rich in color and design—or his paintings—or carvings or whatever—and you knew because you had seen with your own eyes—these were not the result of contrived effort but instead had sprung from the inner being leaping out through his finger tips. Janine wanted to know him—to see him—to learn some at least of his magic. She opened to him and he responded—both naturally and with speculative forethought. He could certainly dig her—if she was at all sensitive—and he was inclined to consider her a somewhat spoiled child hardly aware of anything but beautiful to see—and then she just might be able to set him up fairly permanently financially. He was aware enough of her circumstances to feel confident she was due to be completely free in a short time when Peter and Allen sailed for India. He had been attracted first by Elise—not only because of her strange beauty but also she was a challenge—still Janine was fantastically beautiful in

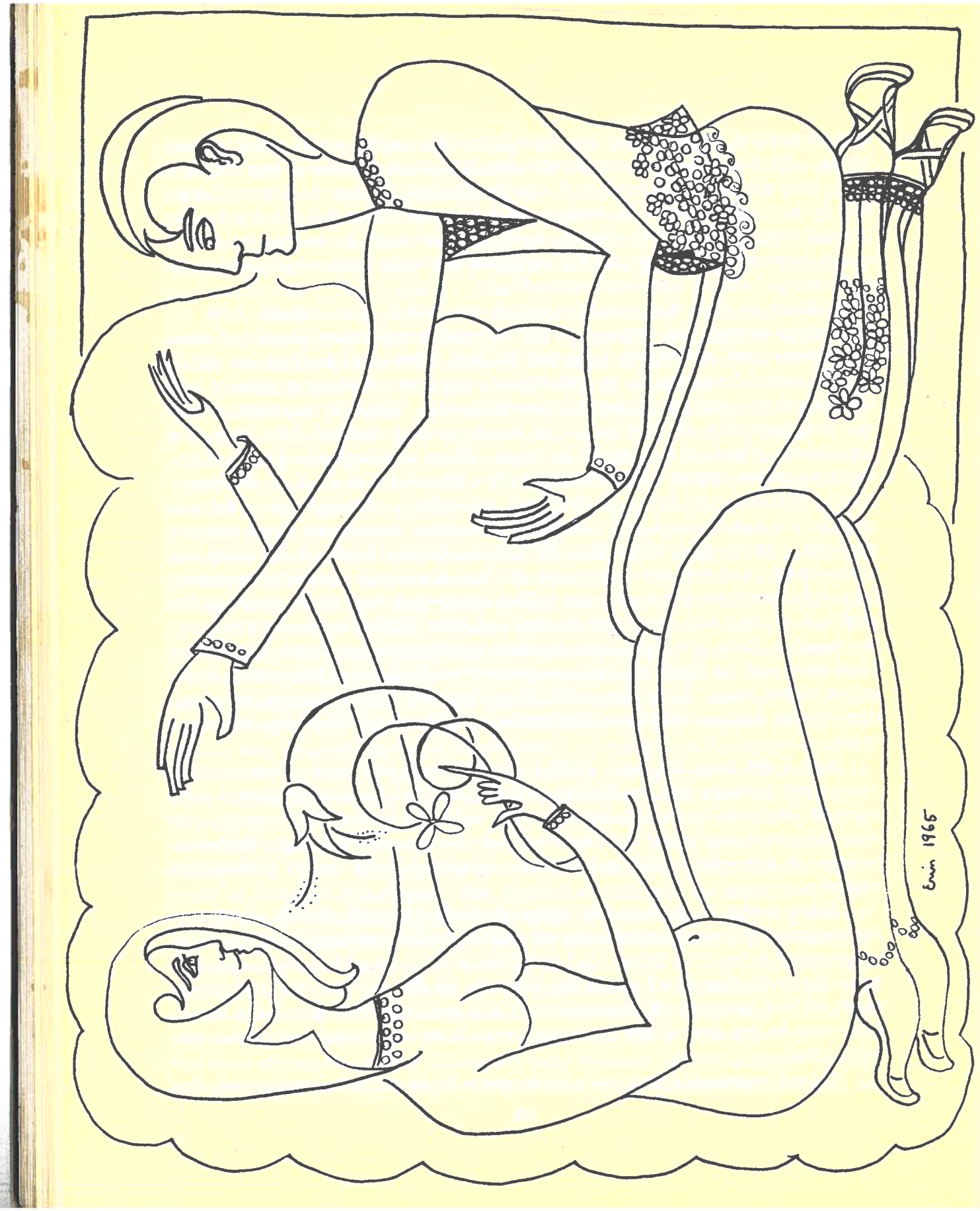
many ways and he was sure she lacked strength and he could swallow her whole. He had failed to accept one very important feature of her personality—she simply could not lie—it was impossible for her to try—nor was she in any way a conniver unless as it happened occasionally she had to try and keep things going—that is—keep a place where he and his followers could work and ball. But in the beginning she still believed it possible to talk straight and be answered accordingly.

Sitting to one side—always stoned—my whole self—imbued with all happening around—the scene—the people—and many—many layers of consciousness just awakened—I watched Bill and Elise—Bill and Janine—Elise—Janine—and I was unable to understand—the overwhelming goodness and the almost devastating evidence of possible evil. Ethically speaking it was my responsibility to remove or at least try and remove Bill from the premises. Elise did not want him there. Elise and Janine had been sharing the apartment and Bill was obviously a threat to so neat an arrangement. Elise surely loved Janine and regardless circumstances did not want to see her harmed. Of course—some of the statements about a sorry end—etc. were—even were they to happen—hardly worth mentioning and also—which is of utmost importance she had absolutely no right to interfere at least till such time Janine called—help—and even then—there is the problem of who has any right to try and alter deliberately—between any two people. True it's unpleasant to see a woman knocked down—their eyes blackened and so forth but in most cases I've discovered the woman is as guilty as the man. Elise—beautiful Elise—knew it was pointless speaking directly to Janine—Janine would continue to do exactly according her dictates.

And I did fear for her. Still I did not want to run the risk of being alone—not because my loneliness bothers me but mostly because I respected Janine's decisions knowing full well she had a clear picture of what she was searching for—and were I to come on as though I failed to believe in her—she would surely have withdrawn—and in all probability entirely.

Elise spoke to Janine—inquiring of Allen (she truly loved) and Peter and suggesting Janine not take any amphets. Janine answered her question concerning Allen and Peter—but told her it was none of her fucking business if she—Janine—shot up all the amphets in the world. She had taken most of her clothing off and tossing it in a heap left the room for a small bathroom to one side of the room we were all in—and began filling the tub with water.

Things seemingly became a bit tenser—Elise shifted positions—spoke



with Janine—several times—maybe Bill. I rather drew attention to myself attempting to reach everyone—at some point or another. Janine at some moment—turned to me—and half inquiring—"Amphetamine is good—isn't it Huncke?" I am sure I didn't give her an honest answer—or maybe not dishonest—the truth being—statements or questions declaring me the authority—the undisputed one of knowledge—so he must be accepted as having final say—always leave me in a quandry. Fuck it. I did mouth some kind of answer—and besides Janine liked amphets—also and of importance—she didn't want too much push from outside—she preferred her own means of obtaining her answers—she possessed curiosity concerning living and wanted to search on her own—I was honored she trusted me to be close.

At any rate—one goes back—in a sense to the original plan of trying to tell a story—and finishing in a concise ending.

I know Elise did not like Bill. That is not true—she was ambivalently attracted yet at the time of making a statement—it was of the evil lurking around. She was annoyed by Bill's interest in Janine and warned Janine—he would only bring harm. Bill had claimed an awareness of magic—a familiarity with witchcraft—he could teach and prove his point.

Elise got up walked over to the bed and flopped down—Charlie Parker was blowing—Bill had started another hanging—I had moved over to the table while Janine sat opposite in the chair Elise had vacated. She was waiting for the tub to fill. Bill joined us for a few minutes as we all three picked up on a jolt of amphets. We all enjoyed the action and Janine was interested in all happening around. Bill spoke with her and she seemed pleased and asked questions of her own. He answered by discussion and his creativeness—plus incantations—permitting observation—not recognizable as incantations—thinking perhaps—there might be association of the idea of magic—but certainly his only words were—of his belief in magic. Janine watched and listened. The tub was full and she stepped in behind the door—disrobed and sat in the tub—her movements and splashing audible. Bill put down his work and picked up his flute—walked over and stepped inside near Janine. I know little of their talk—their attitude toward each other—how they looked at one another but Bill taught Janine breathing exercises for long periods of submersion in water—breath control. Toward the last they called me to join them. I heard Bill say to Janine—"He has paranoia—he thinks I have hurt you." I was confused and at the same time—it was of almost no significance—any importance credited was a waste—it was debased of me to have feared for Janine or wondered about her actions. I went in and Janine was radiant—freshly bathed and still in

the tub sitting modestly—her long blond hair let down. She looked at me a moment—her eyes huge and strained to see all she could—half smiling —momentarily drawing one hand thru the water and then back again—then speaking—saying—"Sit down—Bill had been showing me breathing. You are not worried are you? How is Elise."

Bill was squatting by the tub—fingering his flute—a sort of half grin on his face—filling his eye with Janine and making friendly acknowledgments of my being there.

There were two candles burning—one on top a set of drawers reaching above the tub and the other stuck on the edge of the tub.

I sat a moment or two feeling all is well—it won't matter if I leave for a while. I spoke of probably going out—a walk maybe—or simply to snoop about—maybe if lucky—cop a bag of pot. At anyrate I'd cut by Jerry's and if I'd see him—all would be righteous—we could turn on. We had all been smoking off and on throughout the day and night—it would be great if we continued. We all three jived a few seconds—and I departed.

Ponderosa Pine

You speak of Ponderosa Pine and I am catapulted back—oh way back and it is late summer ourside Potlatch, Idaho. It is sunset—the sky riven with saffron—ice green—lavender and changing pinks from flamingo to palest hue overlaid with haunting black cloud shapes. The road is yellow dirt and sand packed down and spread with rough cut white stone and gravel. It twists through the cluster of grey clapboard houses—past a railroad track—a train of flat cars loaded with massive tree trunks fresh cut from the vast forests covering the hills for miles and miles around—too huge for the saw mill—a painted red wood frame building on the edge of the community—where many of the town's people work—the others employed mostly in the forests—axing—cutting—felling—hauling the great majestic trees—the countryside reverberating all day with the agonizing thuds of their crashing death—and we are in an open Model T Ford and we pass the saw mill—the general store—a beer parlor—where on several occasions just before this time I am speaking of—I have gotten drunk downing the frothing pitchers of ice cold beer brought to the table by a dark haired bar maid—wise in the ways of a beer parlor in a lumber town—able to laugh and toss joke for joke with the red faced heavy bodied lumberjacks —still wearing their caulked boots—I once saw two of them in a fight—and when one had fallen—the other stomped on his face in fury until the face looked like a hunk of raw beef when he was finally rescued—and red and black—green and black—orange and black—blue and black checked shirts and all this in a flash in my mind as the road rounds the last of the houses —the evening darkening blue—black in the distance bedizened with the lights of thousands upon thousands of cosmic worlds the stars and planets.

The road now heads into the forests—only the tops of the great trees still visible individually—seemingly brushing the sky—all below a great mass of blackness the headlights penetrating the mass—revealing brown tree trunks either side and green foliage—the limbs of the trees begin too high up for us to see them. My companion is a young Norwegian boy—seventeen—the son of one of the foresters at the ranger station near Potlatch. It is his father's job along with two or three others to keep up on the maintenance of the firetowers—to patrol the area and keep weather reports. The father has made this his life work and is a good but stern man who has raised his son—he hopes—to follow in his footsteps. The son is extremely proud of his father and will in all probability do as his father desires. When he returns from this little excursion or trip he has invited me to accompany him on—I had wandered up into that part of the country several weeks prior and had asked if they had some work I could do around the ranger station and they said yes—and I stayed until leaving on this trip which was to take us over into Montana to visit relatives—a cousin or uncle if I remember correctly of my traveling companion—he will be ready to enter agriculture college at Moscow, Idaho. He is not very talkative and I sit back drinking in the heady aroma of the pine forest almost intoxicated by the richness of the beauty of the night.

We drive steadily thru the night—stopping once in a small town at a lunch room for great steaming mugs of coffee and thick sandwiches of ham and cheese and homemade blackberry pie—then on—spelling each other at the wheel—the road always winding and twisting—alongside rushing streams for several miles up into the hills—past ravines and valleys—once up the side of a mountain—the road zig-zagging all the way up and then all the way down the opposite side. Once in a while we hit stretches of pavement but for the most part the road remained dirt and gravel.

Dawn found us not far from the town of Kellogg, Idaho—a good sized town where we stopped and freshened up in cold spring water—checked the condition of our car—drank coffee—discussed our further route. It was decided we drive thru the Coeur d'Alene country and around the Coeur d'Alene Lake after which we would pick a highway leading up over and thru mountain ranges into Montana.

The topography had changed and we now hit stretches of flat open country with mountains way off in the distance. Huge rocks and boulders lay profusely in all directions. The soil was full of rocks and there were only a few gnarles and twisted live oak trees to be seen instead of the lush green forests. We arrived in Coeur d'Alene—drove thru and picked up a road following the short of the lake—brilliant blue and clear—the shore

line ragged and stony—short windblown and twisted trees leaning toward their reflections in the water. A wind had sprung up and massive cloud formations plowed across the blue sky. The water of the lake became choppy—the surface agitated with small rolling white caps. The scene was magnificent and awe inspiring—beautiful and cold and real. I filled myself with it and can at this instant not only see it all vividly but smell the freshness of air—and hear the whistling of the wind.

We eventually reached the end of this wonderful stretch of earth and water—coming down off the lake road onto a paved highway leading directly into the mountains to be crossed into Montana. We began climbing—higher and higher—until our engine was heated and we were carrying a banner of white steam smoke from the radiator cap at the front of the car. Half way up we came upon a small place at the side of the road where we pulled in to rest a while. Near was a fresh mountain stream rushing downward where we filled cans and poured them into our hot and thirsty car.

The weather had begun to change and to one side of us and back over the jutting angry looking peaks of the seemingly endless chain of mountains we could see rolling grey and black clouds constantly illuminated by flashes of lightning and accompanied by reverberating rumbles of thunder relentlessly bearing down on us.

Once again we began the ascent—slowly crawling toward the top. We had no means of protection against the storm—there was no top for the car and when it hit there would be nothing to do but let it drive down on us.

Gradually we reached the top and looking back could see the black rain curtain—feel the on-coming rush of rain laden wind. At the top of the mountain was a short distance of straight road bound on either side with fairly dense growth of tall and at this time writhing trees. As we started to drive this respite of straight terrain—high up above the world—near the lowering furiously rolling clouds the full force of the storm struck and we could go no further. We pulled over a little onto the shoulder of the road and stopped.

The wind a mass of heavy raindrops relentlessly tore at us as though infuriated at not being able to lift us from our spot and fling us crashing into the heavy grey boulders just ahead—abating an instant and then with renewed vigor attacking our flimsy little car—shaking it and rocking it with the fury and force of its anger. Long jagged sulphurous bolts of lightning drove with full force into the earth around us filling our nostrils with the smell of burning ozone. Thunder crashed deafeningly down and around our heads and all the earth trembled. The roadway became a rushing flow of water—a tree was struck—and split in a great screech the top half fall-

ing toward the ground pulling the wound open further the life of the tree no longer protesting. With this sacrifice to the greed of the storm—it began to slacken passing on over—only occasional flashes of lightning and instead of crashing thunder there was only low rumblings becoming fainter in the distance. The rain had ceased altogether—the clouds began clearing away and soon the sun—bright and warming appeared.

We of course were thoroughly drenched and what was worse unable to start the car. We worked with it—checking the motor—cranking—but all to no avail. It was utterly impossible to get it moving. Finally we hailed a passing car and asked for a tow to the first filling station. The people—a man and his wife—were accomodating and towed us down to a station the other side of the mountain in Montana. There we discovered all was lost—not only were things flooded but completely burned out—the Model T had had it—it would carry us no further.

My friend was very disappointed but decided it best to call his father. He called and his father said we were to stay near our present location—the boy's mother would pick us up in the family car the following day.

We stayed in a motel cabin not far from where we had made the call. He was very disappointed with the entire experience and failed to share my enthusiastic impression of the storm—nor was he impressed by what I considered the wild almost breathtaking beauty of the lake and the forests we had driven thru—saying at one point—he supposed they did have beauty but in his opinion they were just a lake and a forest—and a forest was a forest no matter what one said about it—and yes the storm was sort of exciting but he would rather have his Model T working—after all he'd earned the money to pay for it and now it was just a loss.

His mother arrived the next afternoon and we drove straight back to the ranger station near Potlatch.

I guess he had decided I wasn't a very stable kind of person—because although I remained several days at the station before leaving to head back home—he never came around to say hello and once or twice his father who had always in our short acquaintance been friendly and considerate—was somewhat sharp in his replies to questions I asked him.

Anyhow—you spoke of Ponderosa Pine—and this was Ponderosa Pine country—and I remember it all clearly. Of course there was Tamarack and yellow pine and white pine—but Ponderosa is a beautiful name—and maybe—just maybe—there really wasn't any Ponderosa there at all—but please let it suffice—of the other three—white and yellow pine and Tamarack I am sure—and somewhere in the past I've been around Ponderosa country of that you may be confident. It is only that I am a little forgetful

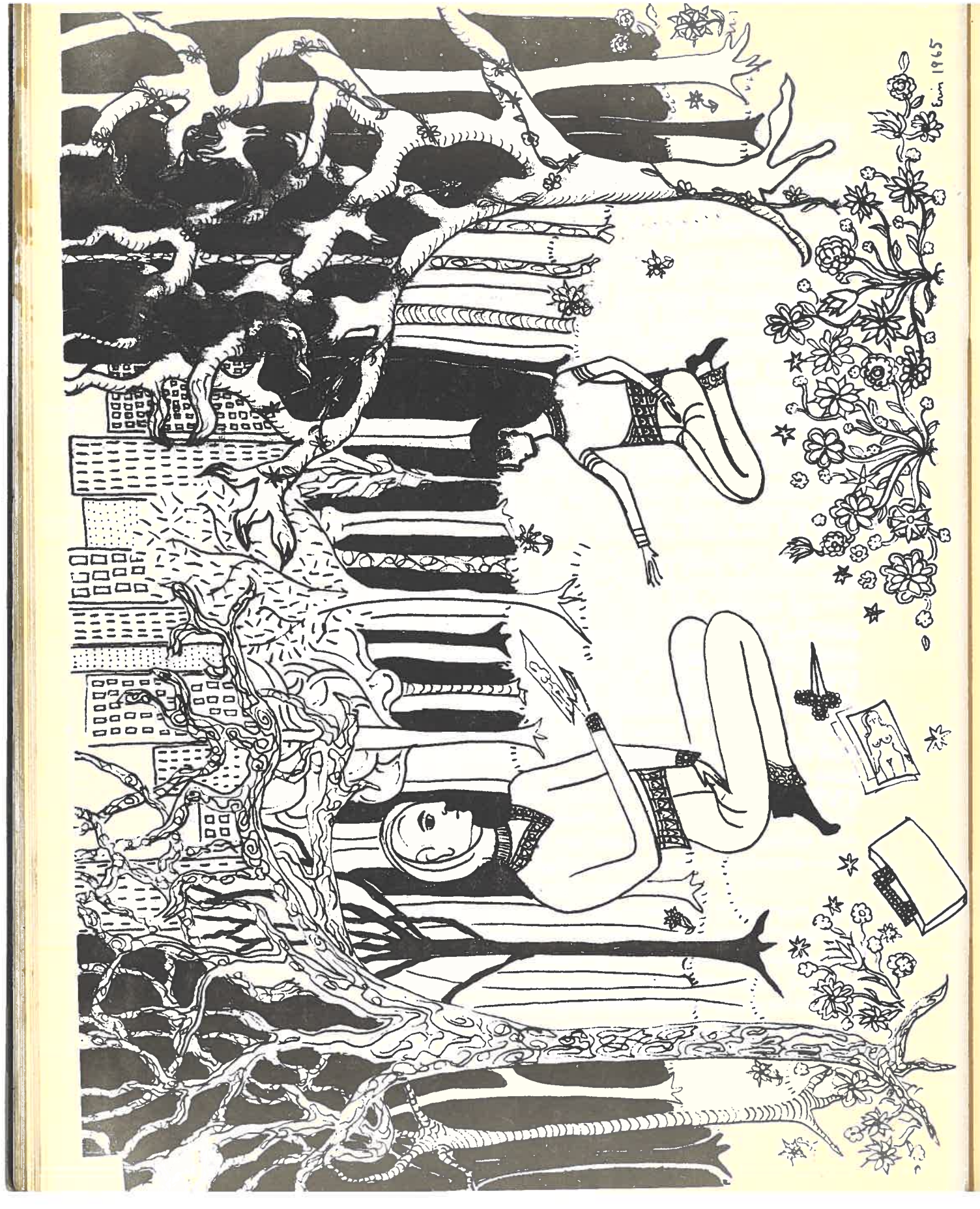
these days—just where all the things I've been around or near are located.

I wouldn't have bothered with further explanations except—I dislike being caught in an outright lie—and it is just possible Ponderosa Pine is strictly native of California and it would be most embarrassing to hear this—after having given it root—in a manner of speaking—in wild—rugged Idaho. And at this point—that is right this moment that will already be of the past—when you hear of it—or read of it—I sincerely believe that by now Ponderosa Pine must thrive in Idaho and that if it wasn't there when I was there—someone planted it there—and in no time it began to flourish.

The forests of Idaho are or at least were truly wild and beautiful. The great tall trees reaching to the sky and on the stillest days—with hardly a breeze stirring near the earth—one hears the whishing of the tree tops way up high enough to always feel the wind. And at their feet—wild flowers—ferns—flowing streams—berry bushes and morning glory vines. Sometimes of course—where they have grown very close together in groves like clusters on the sides of the mountains—and no sun has penetrated down through to the earth—there is only blankets of dark brown needles sere and dry.

There is wild life—deer and bear—pheasant and grouse—rabbits and squirrels—there are only non poisonous snakes—and many kinds of birds.

As I said before it is surely Ponderosa Pine country—and if anyone asks you to visit Idaho—make sure you don't refuse—and if I am around still—please please see if you can swing the invitation for me as well. Every now and then it all comes back to me in a rush and strange as it may sound coming from an old drug soaked city character like myself—I long to see all I have spoken of and much I've left unsaid—again. Perhaps my most carefree hours were spent there—and maybe it is impossible to recapture any of it—but I sure as hell—occasionally long to give it a try.



In the Park

Morning—early—break of dawn—the sky clear and blue—the sun's rays reaching downward through the leaves and boughs of the trees outside our windows and bird calls prominent above the occasional voices of the early risers and the sounds from the stirring around of those just awakened. I have just returned from a long morning walk through the streets of the city. I have always enjoyed walking and much of my life has been spent roving city streets through the hours of darkness. Some of my more welcome memories and recollections have to do with my youth in Chicago and many—many—nights spent wandering through the city streets and parks—and along the lake front—finally resting atop a stone piling perhaps or on a bench watching the sun rise. I had adventures and strange experiences —frequently meeting and becoming involved with other night people. I learned much about sex and about the vast number of people who make up the so-called less desirable element in our American way of life. Haunted people—lonely people—misfits—outcasts—wanderers—those on the skids—drunkards—deviates of all kinds—hustlers of every description—male and female—old people and young people—and they come from every section of the country.

Were I requested to select the strangest—the most unusual—the most vicious—the most dangerous—generally the most outstanding—the saddest —the most frightening—the kindest—the one most in need of love—or the one most apt to give love—I would be completely stymied—and at this point there are many I have forgotten. There is one who stands out from the rest slightly—perhaps because he was my first encounter with someone who was—according to even extreme comparison with what I have been

taught was sane—beyond the limit and undoubtedly very sick and well along toward maniacal. He was unquestionably an excellent example of just what can happen to a human being in a society geared to greed and power where the human element is almost entirely ignored except in the matter of lip service to man as an individual—but remains actively indifferent while spewing forth a constant mounting percentage of the population into the group known as—human waste—which is accounted for by recognizing the tragedy as a sociological hazard to be expected in the best of organized society.

I was about fourteen when I met him and although I was conscious of his aloneness it wasn't until considerably many more years were added to my age—I realized with any real degree of compassion—the stark horror he himself must have sensed almost constantly regarding his existence.

It was toward dusk of a warm late summer day—walking through a somewhat remote section of park—thickly wooded and little used by people out near the lake front—that I first became aware of him. I had left the path that wound around and through the area and was intending to make a short cut through the trees and bushes to the edge of the lake. I had just pushed through a heavy clump of bushes into a clearer area when I suddenly saw him standing a bit to one side up near the trunk of a large tree. He was partially facing toward me and as I rather abruptly halted—mostly because of being surprised by seeing him—he smiled—and said "Hi." I answered—saying—"Hello—you kind of took me by surprise." While answering I looked at him more carefully—taking in his appearance in detail. He was thin and not much taller than me—with sharp pointed facial features—and though his thin rather long mouth carried a smile—his eyes—light blue in color—remained cold and hard. His hair was dark blond—almost brown—straight and long—and part of it fell to one side of his face—covering his ear—and as I watched he raised his hand and pushed it back—only to have it again fall down as before. His hands were large—with exceedingly long fingers and somehow didn't seem to go with the rest of his appearance. He was wearing a white shirt—somewhat soiled and haphazardly tucked into his black trousers. He wore an old pair of badly scuffed brown shoes.

As I began moving intending to continue on my way—he stepped almost directly in front of me and reached out and took hold of my arm—up near the shoulder—and partly over the muscle. His long hard fingers dug into my flesh and as he applied pressure I winced with pain. He had taken me almost unaware and for a moment I was as intensely frightened as I have ever been—my entire body seemed suffused with panic. I started to

struggle—trying to break away. He exerted more force and for an instant I thought—he is going to kill me. He began speaking to me in a sort of imploring tone—begging me not to get scared—he wasn't going to hurt me—although he could. "See"—he said—and he raised one of his hands up toward my face—to show me—the gleaming blade of a knife. "I won't hurt you—come on—over this way"—he said as he began half pulling me along with him toward some tall bushes.

By then my fear and panic had subsided. Somehow seeing him up close had helped dispel some of the fear. He was younger than he had first appeared—probably somewhere in his late twenties—and also—he had stirred my curiosity in some fashion.

I can't remember all that transpired in the short distance we covered but I had started talking and had succeeded in establishing a sort of friendly note into the situation so that as we reached the bushes he removed his hand from my arm and although he still carried his knife—he seemed less menacing.

It was still quite light and although the whole area was filled with shadows one could see plainly.

We pushed into the bushes—stooping over a bit to avoid being scratched on the face—with me in the lead. There was a clear space in the center and we stopped. It became obvious to me immediately that he had been there before. Lying on the ground was a black jacket folded—and leather briefcase. He told me to sit down and as I did he squatted down in front of me for a moment then sank down to a sitting position on the ground—his legs stretched out in front of him. He was in a position where—although he was in front of me—I was facing his side. He fumbled in his shirt pocket and found a couple of cigarettes—one of which he gave me. Putting his knife down somewhere along his side away from me he located matches and lighted our cigarettes. He allowed himself to lean back a little and drew deeply on his smoke. We had both been quiet while this had taken place and I was a bit startled when he threw his cigarette down suddenly and said—"Look at that—ever seen anything like it"—and he reached down to the fly of his pants—pulled it open and drew out his cock. It was enormous. "Bet you never saw one that big—before"—he said as he began slowly masturbating. He was quite right—I had never seen anything—even remotely comparable in size or length and my thought was—that he was some kind of freak of nature and that this was some kind of malformation.

"You're a nice kid"—he said. "I think you wouldn't laugh at someone—who is different—just because they are different. Here—put your hand on my cock. Just hold it—don't move it—but squeeze—not too hard—

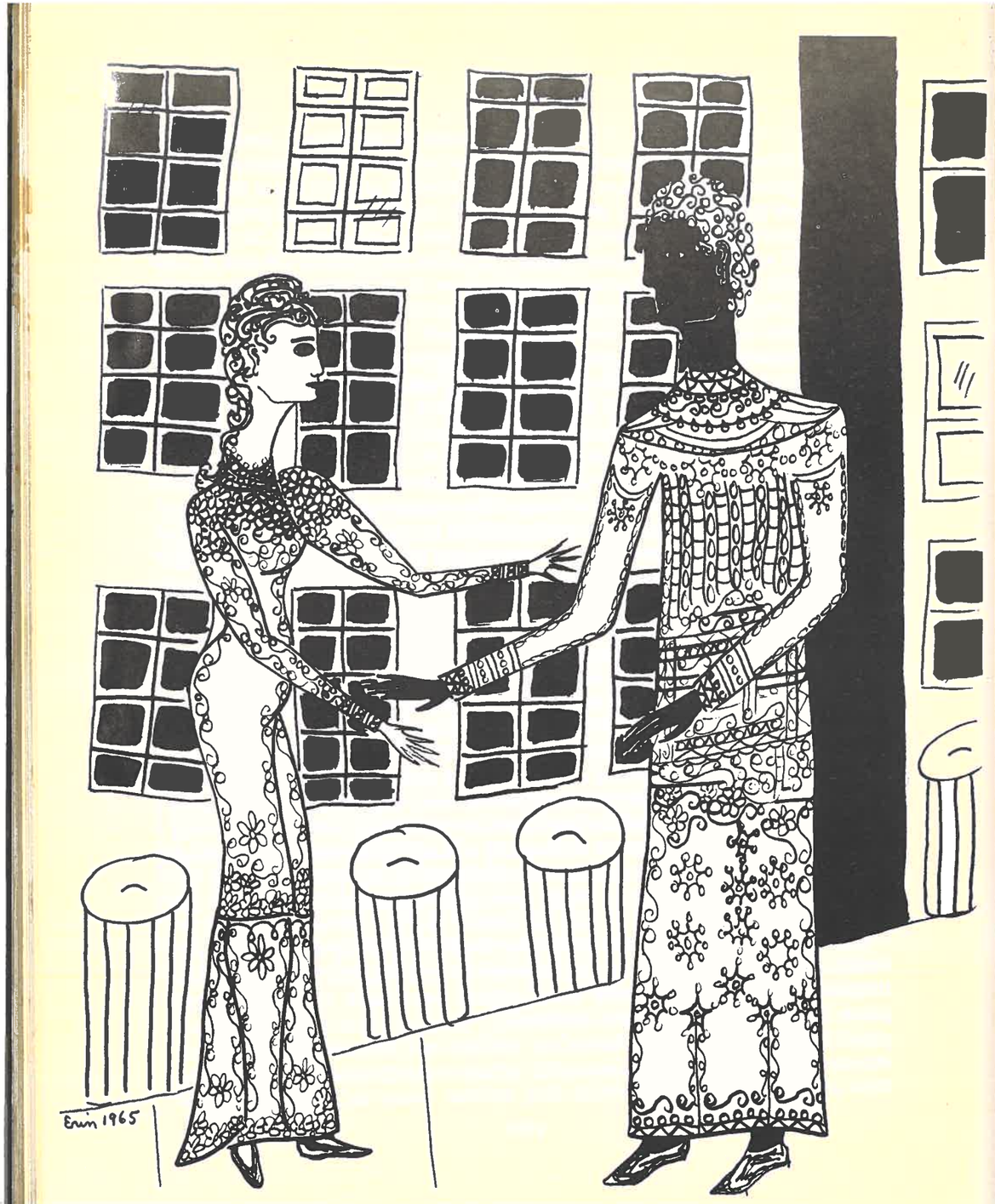
just squeeze. I want you to see some pictures."

I reached over and held his cock in my hand—complying with his request. He picked up his briefcase—opened it and began removing stacks of photographs. He put them down by his side and then putting the briefcase out of the way—he picked up one of the photographs and showed it to me. It was the picture of a little girl maybe seven or eight years old completely nude. Looking at it more closely I saw where pencil marks had been drawn around the small mound of her pussy to look like hair. "Ain't she a little doll"—he said. "Do you think I could stick this into her?" And pushing my hand away he grabbed his cock in his hand and furiously jerked it for a minute or two all the time muttering obscene words—half stuttering out statements—about how good it would feel and about it being best and a favor to a girl to get fucked young and especially with a big cock because then later—no other cock unless bigger could ever hurt her. He threw down the first picture and began picking up one after another—showing them to me. Most were of children and many were of children without clothing. In one there was a little boy and a little girl and apparently he disliked the idea of the little boy having a penis because he had blotted it out with black ink. There were several of naked women and he described in detail how thrilled they would be if he were to fuck them. Finally he returned to the first picture. This apparently was his favorite and he gazed at it almost tenderly. All the time he had continued playing with himself and now he reached over and began fumbling with me. The whole experience had been unnerving and I hadn't had an erection but as he opened my trousers and began playing with me I grew excited. He looked at my cock closely—making little comments about my never comparing to him—and that I would never save some little girl from being hurt. He stopped playing with me—telling me to begin jerking myself so he could watch. As I began he applied himself more vigorously to his own masturbation—all the time talking about fucking the little girl. "I got it in her now—oh it feels good—it's way up in her belly—I've got my big prick in her little tight cunt—it's in up to the balls—oh it's good—I'm going to come in her—I'm getting ready—oh I feel it coming—all my hot juice is for her—oh watch—" With that he ejaculated—over and over again—his whole body shaking and quivering and as he slackened up—he started weeping.

Cat & His Girl

Several years ago—that is—about four years ago—when I was comparatively new on the scene involving most of the people I've come to know since then and their activities and I was still unable to recognize or distinguish who comprised the hard core group from those similar to myself who had just fallen on the scene or had been part of it only a short while—I met a very beautiful young girl who at the time was one of the people I saw regularly. She was pretty obviously coupled with a cat whose reputation was of a questionable nature in so far as his relationship with women was concerned and I recall distinctly wondering how it was anyone as apparently hardened as himself could find the patience to spend time with anyone as completely unskilled in the ways of living in his particular type of environment as the girl and I observed and watched both of them closely. It was soon evident his interest was at best superficial—and instead of possessing any deep regard for her—he held her in contempt and was merely using her as a means of keeping himself in pocket money—since she always had money—she supposedly obtained from her parents which she promptly turned over to him. They lived in my apartment for a while and I got to know them both.

Frequently he would disappear for a day or two at a time and she would sit around waiting for him to return—watching and listening to the innumerable other people who were either permanent residents of the place or who came and went constantly. Most of these people were engaged in some creative endeavor or another and possessed in most instances a full scale temperamental nature—usually associated with the idea of the typical artist—which they seldom made an effort to curb or



control and I remember thinking she was amazingly calm and seemingly undisturbed by the constant flare-ups of temper and erratic behavior of her acquaintances—especially if—as I suspected—she came from the ordinary middle class background of present day society. Much of what was happening was certainly unconventional and extreme and I couldn't help but wonder at her not being obviously shocked but if she was surprised even—she succeeded effectively in keeping it to herself—never in my presence revealing the slightest degree of anything being other than what she had been accustomed to most of her life. Her personal conduct remained shy and unassuming—retaining always—evidence of nothing more than what one might expect from any ordinary—conventionally raised young girl.

Her appearance was striking mostly because of her very vivid coloring. Her facial features were very finely molded and impressed one with their delicacy of line. Her eyes were a deep rich brown—a trifle sad in expression. Her hair was a rich chestnut brown—slightly unruly—falling to her shoulders in length and accentuating the cameo quality of her face. Her skin was very pale except for her cheeks which were always slightly flushed and tinged with pink. Her mouth was full shaped and red. She seldom smiled but when she did—her whole face lit up and one felt oneself gladdened just seeing her. She was not very tall and although at first glance seemed thin was in fact full figured with rather large breasts and well rounded hips. She had rather long legs—beautifully shaped and was perhaps a bit vain about them because one of the few times I saw her lose her composure was when she discovered a run in her stocking and refused to leave until someone got her a new pair.

Occasionally we would find ourselves alone in the apartment and it was then I got to know her a little better and began taking a personal interest in her—prior to the first time we talked together I had accepted her along with the rest of the scene—as charming to look at but hardly anyone I might become more intimately involved with. There were any number of very beautiful girls around and besides I didn't care much for the cat she was making it with and therefore—other than observing her—I had made no effort to get to know her.

The first time we spoke—we had been alone in the apartment about an hour and I was busy straightening and sorting a stack of drawings that someone had done and left in a pile and scattered about my room—when she approached me hesitantly and asked me for a cigarette. I gave her one—extracting one from the package for myself and as I was lighting it—she leaned over and took a light also—then drew back and said—"I think I like you. You don't seem mean and selfish—like most of the others around

here. Tell me—do you like Gore—the fellow I'm with?" I was a bit startled by her directness and since I didn't much care for Gore—hesitated a moment before replying. She noticed my hesitancy and spoke again saying —"I don't think you do like him. I've noticed you seldom speak to him." "No—I don't"—I said—"frankly I don't think I trust him—not that he has done anything to me personally—but somehow there is something about the manner in which he speaks to people—makes me feel he is false." She sort of bobbed her head up and down in agreement while I was speaking and when I had finished she said—"That is how I feel also. I don't know exactly how I became involved with him and I want to get away from him—but I like all these people and this place. It is a new experience for me. You see my mother and father think I am insane. They have had me locked up twice—the last time I ran away and they caught me and I had to go back and now I am out on probation. My parents hate me and I hate them and I am willing to do anything to get away from them. When I was twelve—I'm almost seventeen now—they caught me having sex with a neighbor boy and they raised a lot of hell—my mother said I was depraved and my father called me a whore and beat me and I fought him with a knife and he was cut. Now they don't leave me alone one minute and I have to sneak out of the house and when I do I stay away for days and they look for me. They have reported me to the probation officer and when they catch me—I'll have to go into the hospital again. They give me money and sometimes I steal it from my mother's cash box or from my father's pockets. Gore wants money and I can't get him any right now. He said I should try turning tricks and maybe I will." She had said all this in a rush and sat looking at me as though she expected me to immediately solve all her problems. I was startled by her sudden outburst and her story had made me sad. There was nothing I could say or do to reassure her and perhaps help her. I did suggest she think about tricking a little longer before trying it—telling her she should wait and that if she was going to do anything of that nature she would be wiser to wait until she found someone else to make it with and that I was pretty sure Gore would only cause her pain and unhappiness.

After that she remained around the place a few more days and then disappeared. I asked Gore about her and he said she was a dumb broad and had probably been sent back to the hospital and he hoped to fuck he'd never see her again.

Several months passed and one day walking on Avenue C I ran into her. She was looking very well and seemed glad seeing me. We sat in a little restaurant and drank coffee and talked. She said she had gone back

but was out again and had met some other cat who she liked and who she guessed liked her although there wasn't any love between them—she was happier than she had been. She said she had turned on junk several times and liked it. She had apparently managed to come to some agreement with her parents and she was now allowed more freedom of action. From then on we would occasionally meet and she kept me posted concerning events in her life. Once or twice she had obviously been straight on schmeck and once she asked me to cop for her. And then one day—she met me and told me she had fallen in love. He was a spade cat and beautiful she said. I wished her well and said I'd like to meet the cat. We made arrangements to meet the next day.

I didn't see her again for almost six months and when I did I was unprepared for the extreme change in her whole personality. She had grown sharp and somewhat hard. She had changed her hair style and was wearing more make up. She said she was tricking regularly and doing very well. She had a habit and wanted me to cop for herself and her old man. I copped for her and we made a meet for later—when she would have some more bread and I could cop for her again.

From then on I saw her steadily and although I heard of her lover from others and from her I never met him. Then again she disappeared and that was the last I saw of her until about six months ago. Again she was taking junk but this time alone. She and her old man had parted. She had grown visibly older and was seemingly reconciled to her loneliness.

Meanwhile—I had met her ex-lover. I had heard he was a mean cat and had treated her badly so I was a bit reluctant about developing his acquaintance—but gradually we became better acquainted. I liked him. He is quite handsome and has never given me cause to mistrust him. We have never become close friends but I have learned to respect him over many others.

We had never spoken for any length of time until the other night—when he began speaking about how they had first met and how deeply in love he had fallen with her.

"You know man"—he said—"I really wanted to make a go of it with her. I guess it was mostly her family that messed us up. In the beginning —we both had jobs and were getting along great until her father discovered I am a negro. Man—he really came on—at one point saying—'I know how to handle niggers.'—He took her home and as soon as she could she ran away and came back. From then on we stayed more or less in hiding. She had become disgusted and started going out on dates some girl she knew would arrange for her. She began making money—and would come home

sometimes with two and three hundred dollars. Whether you can believe this or not I've always disliked the idea of a chick hustling or of my living off the bread she'd bring in but at the time there seemed nothing else to do. Anyway our lives became hectic—we were using junk and twice she O.D.ed and I thought I'd lost her. We had managed to avoid her parents for a while but they had hired detectives and one Sunday afternoon they came in on us and she was dragged off home. Again the same routine—she came back—we hid—she hustled and we shot junk. By this time we were beginning to get on each other's nerves and our little affair was strictly on the skids. At one point we thought maybe—if we could get married—we could still make it. I called her mother and father and made an appointment to see them. I kept the appointment and talked to them and asked them to let us get married. Her father almost had a stroke and swore he would see her dead before he'd allow her to marry any black-assed son of a bitch. There was nothing to do but accept the situation as it stood but we both knew it was almost over. Finally one day—during one of the panics—about two hours after she had left on her dates—I got a phone call from the Harlem Hospital—she had been rushed to the emergency ward after being severely beaten and found unconscious but was doing all right and wanted me to come and pick her up. She had been worked over badly and her face was almost frightening to see. I took her home with me and during the four or five days of her recovering we decided to call it quits. And that was that. Once in a while we run into each other and she is doing O.K. but somehow she has changed. She stays high most of the time and makes it first with one and then another. All she really wanted was love but I guess it is the one thing she is least apt to ever get."

I had listened to him quietly and when he was finished I could only think of how tragic the story was and of the vast amount of stupidity and cruelty inflicted on the two of them and of how little chance she has ever had of gaining any kind of happiness.

January 19, 1965

Am completely exhausted following last night—the final hours of the early morning spent alone—Freddie Herko's pad—now almost entirely denuded not even a candle stub for light—only the glow from the lights outside—all in shadowy darkness—haunted with Freddie's spirit—benevolent and kind—but restless—faint rustlings in the other room—strange dark shapes—huge one instant—smaller the next—some smooth and silky to the touch—others furry and slightly coarse.

Mirror shards and scraps of cloth—old pieces of wood—a lovely knee-high table—black lacquered—an old couch spring—bits of writing on the walls—one in particular—referring to the brightness of the sun—can't recall the full quote—names—strange designs—symbols triangular and circular—wooden boxes—pots and pans and weather sticks—an old chair and a full length door frame—and strange kitchen utensils.

Gone the bits of gold mesh and jeweled trinkets—the box of photographs of male body-builders—partially finished collages—the lengths of draped black net—white lace—and the drapes of blue and wine red—the pots of growing plants—the strange bells and bright-colored squares of oddly patterned cloth—the cinder blocks—brass pots and pitchers and the magic and beautiful profusion of feathers and stones and sticks and jewels—beads and chains.

No touch of Freddie or Debbie left—only their restless spirits. And the floor is white and if one closes one's eyes—Freddie bounds across the full length of the room—waves his bejewelled scepter and in stately grace—her hair falling free around her shoulders—swath of black crepe wrapped about her lovely form—falling to the floor in gathered folds—a goddess to kneel before in loveworship—Debbie—steps forward—her arms flung wide and for the instant the palest blue flame illuminates the room—and one's being receives unencumbered the power and love—known alone in purity and life—not as we know it but in the fullness of the infinite—enters our very souls and the flame flickers out—as we absorb the infinitesmal change—our spirits—never again to be the same—closer the great surging burning force of joy—beauty and reality and we have known magic—only alas—to have our tongues trip over the word—our eyes look downward—and all but a few of those we tell—remain skeptical.

November, 1964

Faery Tale

Once upon a time there were three girls sitting in a room with three men. There was something one sensed as enchanted about the girls—one was very young and she wore a beautiful headdress made of soft silk—rich with delicately patterned outlines in rich brilliant shades of blue—and she wore a gown of simple lines made of linen—and tiny kid slippers with mosaic like cutouts near the tips of the toes and they may have been of Moroccan origin. Her eyes were dark brown and sparkled with hidden light. Her laughter was gay and musical. And one of the girls was tall and thin with long blue black hair which fell down around her shoulders and she wore black ballet tights and a white silk shirt and leather sandals upon her feet. Her eyes were dark brown and brooding and her laughter was hesitant and sometimes sad. She was not as beautiful as the very young girl—but she was beautiful.

The last girl was the strangest of the three and the oldest. Her hair was brown and in curls all around her face. She was a small girl and plain. Sometimes her laughter was shrill and sometimes low and indistinct. Her eyes were brown and very sad. She was very quiet and lay upon a couch curled up in a small ball and watched everyone.

Two of the men were young. The third man was old—very old.

One of the young men was tall and thin and when he walked he swayed slightly from side to side as though caught in a cross current of gently blowing wind. He had many colored sticks in his hand and he would select one with his other hand and swinging his arm and hand downward he would touch the stick to the surface of a large square of blinding white paper and moving his hand first in a sweeping arc—and then in a slow straight stroke

or in tiny spasmodic jerks—he drew with his colored stick upon the white paper and soon a picture appeared. And the girls were delighted when they saw it and exclaimed at the strange design and the bright color. And he smiled saying "This is a magic picture."

Thereupon the other young man spoke and said "Magic picture—indeed. Nothing great about that—all pictures are magic pictures—if one knows what to look for. He plunged his hand in his pocket—fumbled inside the pocket a moment or two and withdrew his hand. Holding his hand forward for all to see—he opened his fingers slowly and lying in the palm of his hand was a little pile of green herb of some kind. "I will show you magic" he said. He removed a small pipe from his other pocket and carefully poured the little pile of green herbs into the bowl of the pipe. First he tamped it down and then he struck a match and holding the flame close to the green herbs—he drew a deep breath through the pipe and ignited the green herbs and the air was suddenly filled with a pungent odor—like leaves burning in the fall of the year. "This is magic" he said. "Draw deeply several times through the pipe—and soon you will become aware of a new consciousness."

Everyone did as he bid them do—and soon the atmosphere in the room was of another dimension—and everybody said they saw the world in a new way—and they were impressed with this great wonder.

And then the old man brought forth a silver tipped wand and a small package he opened—revealing an amount of glittering crystalline powder he melted and dissolved in water. Dipping the tiny wand into the resultant solution he then pressed the point of the wand into his skin near one of his veins—waited an instant and then withdrew the point. His eyes became brighter and more alert—he seemed suddenly to be younger and he laughed and looked around the room at each person and said—"Now you have truly witnessed a magical feat. By injecting a little of that clean glittering crystal into myself—I now see the world more clearly and recognize the harmony and peace of living. Will each of you try a little? Oh please do—for I love each of you and want you to be happy." And he fixed a little of his magic powder for everyone—and everyone tried it—and all were pleased.

The room in which the girls and the three men were sitting—talking—laughing—sometimes painting pictures—occasionally playing with and petting a small dog—gray and wooly and curly haired—impish and merry and mischievous—who is the constant companion of the oldest of the three girls.

Everyone in the room is imprisoned in this room in a house painted white and is located between two thoroughfares to the old city marked—

A & B. From the windows they can look into a beautiful garden of trees and flowering bushes. Early each morning bird song greets the first light of breaking day. No one other than those who have entered this realm of enchantment knows the garden is there.

The room casts a strange spell that can be broken by the old man—or by the little dog—but there are three musical notes that must break into the point of awareness before these six people may return to their separate identities. Now they form a whole in the beyond world of magic—and neither is one recognizable individually from the other nor can they voluntarily depart from the other.

There were colored hangings—rich in tone—pictures—alive with forms and shadings and vivid lines and rainbow hued—cushions and candle flames—brushes and bottles of dye—bowls and saucers—silver spoons—and lantern like lamps—and a Tarot deck of cards.

All want out—none are satisfied—and like all people—are anxious to return to the familiar world of those things—they but shortly—were praying to escape from. "Please—old man" they cried—"gain us our release—please—please." They looked at the old man and each offered him a token—one a small ruby—one a silver clip—one a scrap of silver threaded purple silk—one a small copper cup and one a scarab carved lapis lazuli. They set their offerings before the old man and he smiled and said—"First one of you must give me something I can make a flute of.

And then the little dog picked up a small stick and trotted over to the old man and dropped it at his feet. He picked it up and lo—and behold—it was a straight shaft of bamboo. The little dog gazed up at the old man—and the tip of a little pink tongue showed—and the long fluffy ears were cocked slightly and there was a bright twinkle in the eyes. The old man patted the little dog and said—"This will do just fine." He removed a small knife from his pocket—and quickly made three notches in the bamboo stick. Then placing the end of the stick to his lips and his fingers over the notches making them beat a short tattoo—he suddenly blew through the stick and three beautiful notes ascended into the air.

And alas—all the magic beauty fell away—and pictures became pictures—and hangings became dyed cloth—bowls and saucers became ashtrays—and candle flame became a burning candle—and the room returned to being just a room and the garden—became a few trees and bushes in a back yard—and the bird song became a cacophony of twittering and chirping—noisy and a bit irritating.

The girls lost their enchanted look—and became just girls. The men—just men. Only the little dog remained impish and cute—sly and cunning.

The old man sighed and putting down his improvised flute—he walked to the now visible door—it had been hidden by a long hanging—opened it and without saying a word closed the door behind him and walked away. Once—just once the little dog barked.

The five people left behind became busy donning their identities.

"I must meet—my lover—at one o'clock" said the young girl as she fussed with her hair patting it in place. "And I have an important meeting with a freedom group" said the black haired girl as she slung her handbag over her shoulder. The plain girl said "Oh I'm so tired—and now all this magical nonsense is over—I can go back to sleep. This is my room really —you know—and although I like each of you—I prefer my solitude." The two men sighed and said—"Well it had been interesting but frankly—this magic business is pretty wishy washy stuff—and it doesn't put food in the old stomach." And all but the plain girl and the little dog departed.

And as she fell off to sleep—she missed the little dog picking up the stick and carrying it back into the far corner of the room.

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HUNCKE'S JOURNAL

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